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 A C C O U N T  
 O F T H E  
 M A N N E R S A N D C U S T O M S  
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 I T A L Y;  
 W I T H  
 O B S E R V A T I O N S  
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 M I S T A K E S O F S O M E T R A V E L L E R S,  
 W I T H  
 R E G A R D T O T H A T C O U N T R Y.  
 B Y J O S E P H B A R E T T I.  
 V O L. I.

Il y a des Erreurs qu' il faut réfuter sérieusement ; des Al  
 dités dont il faut rire ; et des Faussetés qu' il faut rep  
 avec force.

VOLT:

D U B L I N:

Printed for W. COLLES, in Dame Street.  
 MDCCLXIX.





T O T H E

EARL OF CHARLEMONT.

M Y L O R D,

**U**PON your arrival in Italy several years ago, a lucky chance brought me within the sphere of your notice ; and from that fortunate moment a friendship began on your Lordship's side, that has never suffered any abatement ; and an attachment on mine, which will never cease as long as I have life.

Besides my desire of shewing, by this only method in my power, my gratitude to your Lordship for so flattering a distinction, I have had another motive for this dedication. In the following work I censure with great freedom the accounts given of Italy by several English and several foreign writers of travels. It will not readily be believed that I venture to do so upon trivial grounds when I address myself to Your Lordship. Your knowledge of its language and manners is hardly less than my own, who am a native of that country ; and your knowledge of its literature much more extensive.

To you therefore, my Lord, as to a judge the best informed and the most candid, I beg leave to dedicate an essay intended to give your countrymen ideas of Italy something more correct than those which they have hitherto received from the writers on this subject.

Continue, my Lord, to look upon an old acquaintance with that partiality and affection, which has so long been my boast. No kindness of yours will ever be wilfully forfeited by,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

most humble

and most obedient servant,

JOSEPH BARETTI.



## P R E F A C E.

**T**H E following work was not undertaken solely with a design to animadvert upon the remarks of Mr. Sharp and those of other English writers, who after a short tour have ventured to describe Italy and the Italians. Much less would I pass it upon my reader for a complete and satisfactory account of that celebrated country, taken in any one of those many points of view, under which it may be considered. I hope no body will so much mistake the nature of my design. I had long observed, with some indignation, that the generality of travel-writers are apt to turn the thoughts of those young people who go abroad, upon frivolous and unprofitable objects, and to habituate them to premature and rash judgments, upon every thing they see. I have therefore taken occasion, especially from this book of Mr. Sharp, to make them sensible, if I can, of the errors they are led into, and to point out to them some objects of inquiry more worthy of the curiosity of sensible persons, and caution them against being too ready to condemn every thing but what they have seen practised at home. An indiscriminate admiration of foreign manners and customs shows great folly; but an indiscriminate censure is both foolish and malignant.

After having passed ten years in this kingdom, I returned to Italy in 1760.

There I found that my brothers had collected into volumes all the letters I had wrote to them in that long space of time. A natural movement of curiosity induced me to run over those volumes: but I found them (especially the first and second) so full of strange judgments on men and things, taken from sudden and superficial impressions, that I thought myself happy in the opportunity I had of tearing to pieces each leaf as I went on in the perusal of this series of observations.

I beg pardon for this insignificant anecdote that savours perhaps too much of egotism. But what has happened to me, would certainly have happened in similar circumstances to Mr. Sharp, and to almost all the travellers that ever I read. In the following pages I may be thought prejudiced in favour of my own country; and I am not sure whether I can wholly clear myself of this imputation. But I hope my partiality will be thought connected with some knowledge and experience of the matters about which I write. Travellers, though inclined to be candid, are but seldom well informed; and, of course, liable to many mistakes. My reader will at least reap this advantage from the following discussions, that he will thereby have those matters more fully before him towards the direction of his own judgment.



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A N  
A C C O U N T  
O F  
I T A L Y.  
C H A P. I

**F**EW books are so acceptable to the greatest part of mankind, as those that abound in slander and invective. Hence almost all accounts of travels, published within my memory, have quickly circulated, and were perused, at least for a while, with great eagerness, because they have been strongly marked with these characters. Men are fond of the marvellous in manners and customs as well as in events; and a writer of travels, who would make himself fashionable in his own country, is generally politic enough to bring from abroad abundant materials for gratifying, at once, the malignity and the love of novelty, that must predominate in so many of his readers; and he who

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is so little conversant in the affairs of his own country, as not to have any of his speculations upon domestic affairs produced without ridicule, may with safety, and sometimes with reputation, be very wise in those of other countries.

An author of this cast, after a slight survey of the provinces, through which he has had occasion to take a short ramble, returns home; and snatching up his pen in the rage of reformation, fills pages and pages with scurrilous narratives of pretended absurdities, intermixed with the most shocking tales of fancied crimes; very gravely insisting, that those crimes and absurdities were not single actions of this and that individual, but general pictures of nature in the countries through which he has travelled. Every unexperienced reader will infallibly be pleased with an opportunity of laughing at the prodigious folly of him who lives on the other side of the sea, and will always be glad to find that he may bless himself for not having been born in the wicked country beyond the mountain. Thus falshood is palmed for truth upon the credulous, and thus are men confirmed in a narrow way of thinking, and in those local prejudices, of which it ought to be the great end of travelling, and books of travels to cure them.

An itinerary lately published by Mr. Samuel Sharp on the customs and manners of Italy, seems to me above all others a book  
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of this kind. Whether it is to be considered as a candid and instructive account of a foreign country, or as the offspring of an ignorant, careless, and prejudiced writer, will be occasionally examined in the following sheets: and should I prove earnest in the defence of my country, of which he has given so very extraordinary an account, I hope I shall be excused by the generous sympathy of all Englishmen, who are so laudably partial to their own.

But before I enter into the examen of Mr. Sharp's book, it may not be amiss to prove, that he was totally unfit for the task he has voluntarily undertaken; the difficult task of delineating the nation that inhabits the peninsula in which I was born, as he laid under three most capital disadvantages when he entered it; that is to say, he was ignorant of the Italian language; was of no high rank: and was afflicted with bodily disorders.

That Mr. Sharp was ignorant of the Italian language, may be easily proved by only observing, that throughout his work he has spelt several names of families, of saints, and of towns erroneously. His inability in catching sounds when orally uttered, appears most glaringly in his miserable remarks on the Venetian dialect; a dialect very harsh and displeasing to his ears, and yet extremely smooth in itself, as it abounds in vowels even more than the Tuscan, which renders it delightful to the ears of all the Italians. Comparing

paring this dialect with the Tuscan, Mr. Sharp affirms, that the Venetians have the words *Dudice*, *Dulio*, *Diovenne*, *Maniare*, and *Raione*; but these words, which he writes down all in a string, he has whimsically coined himself, and not one of the five belongs to the Venetian dialect, or to any other dialect of Italy. Let any of my readers ask a Venetian, or any other Italian now in England, and I will venture to be called a calumniator, if any Italian whatsoever knows any of these five words, either by Mr. Sharp's spelling, or by any pronunciation that he may invent for them.

Intending to throw a ridicule on the Italians, Mr. Sharp says, that *they give the name of palaces even to their country houses*. But he is himself ridiculous in saying so. *Un palazzo* means in Italian *the building where the sovereign resides, or the house in which a nobleman lives*. Thus Marlborough-house or Devonshire-house would, in Italian, be distinguished from common houses, and be called *palazzo's*. What in England is a *private man's habitation*, or a *building in which many common families live*, in Italian is called *una casa*. The least knowledge of our language had shown Mr. Sharp the distinguishing propriety of these two words, and had kept him from stealing this blunder, along with many others, from Misson's travels through Italy. Misson was not able to separate the idea annexed by the English to their word

word *palace*, from that annexed by the Italians to their word *palazzo*. He thought they both excluded *littleness*, which our word *palazzo* does not, and betrayed his unskilfulness in our language many years ago, as Mr. Sharp does now.

Mr. Sharp is likewise wrong in his assertion, that *what in England is called a little crash of music, composed of two or three instruments, is, in Italian, called ACCADEMIA*; and, that *a trifling halfpenny errand is called AMBASCIATA*. He has probably overheard some footmen make use of these two words in these improper senses, and acquainted his nation with the strange use that the pompous Italians make of their words: but footmen will often speak as improperly in Italy as any where else; and instead of consulting such people about the meaning of words, he ought to have looked into a dictionary.

I could say much more to prove by his book, that Mr. Sharp understands near as much Italian as many French barbers understand English after a month's residence in London. I could easily point out the meagerness of his remarks on the gutturali-ty of the Florentine and the Sieneſe, and laugh at his acuteness in having discovered that they pronounce *ce* and *ci* as the English do *che* and *chi*. I could set in a strong light the impertinence of his decision as to the place where the best Italian is to be learned. But how is it possible for me to descend so

very



very low, as to animadvert on the Italian language with this rare linguist, who talks through one fourth of his book of *Cicisbeo's*, and never once spells the word right, writing for ever *Cicesbeo's* or *Cecesbeo's*?

If his utter ignorance of the Italian language ought to have awed him into silence about the customs and manners of Italy, the mediocrity of his rank in life could certainly not contribute much towards qualifying him for such an undertaking

I will not say by this, that it is an absolute requisite towards painting nations to be a man of high rank; and I am far from intending the least disparagement to him, when I say that he is not a man of high rank. I respect his profession; and if he had given me leave, I would respect himself. I mean only to say, that his descriptions of the manners of the Italian nobility, which fill up a considerable part of his work, are little to be credited, because his rank in life, which in other respects was no disparagement and could be of no prejudice to him, kept the English ministers, as well as the noble English travellers in Italy, from introducing him to the Italian nobles, and consequently from affording him an opportunity of being properly acquainted with their true character.

I must even go a step further, and affirm, that in Venice Mr. Sharp never entered any nobleman's house as a visitor, though he talks  
fo

so much and so wisely about them and their domestic manners. I take it for granted, that Mr. Sharp is incapable of telling a deliberate untruth when called upon: therefore I am sure this my assertion will pass without the least contradiction on his side; and I am likewise sure, in spite of his many letters from Rome and from Naples, in which he speaks so diffusely about the manners of the Roman and Neapolitan nobility, that he will never venture to say he ever entered as a visitor any Neapolitan or Roman house, except that of the marchioness Ceva at Rome, who, upon the simple recommendation of her hair-dresser, treated him with much kindness, and procured him the means of seeing conveniently the ceremonies of the holy week.

But if Mr. Sharp went to Italy without any thing in his rank which could obtain him admittance into any nobleman's house, why did he not, at least, speak with some diffidence in their disparagement, and why did he advance with such an easy confidence, many things to which he neither was nor could, be an eye-witness? How could he be so decisive in his calumnies on their domestic conduct, and paint them all as the most vicious set of wretches that ever existed? Ought he not at least to have informed his readers, that whatever he related of them was a mere hearsay? Would an Italian surgeon, perfectly ignorant of the English language,

guage, be intitled to any credit, if, after a few months residence in England, he took into his head to give, in a printed book, the character of the English nobility, or even of the English coblers? I, who have resided many years in England; who have visited the greatest part of its provinces; who am tolerably skilled in its language, and have kept a great variety of English company, would find myself much embarrassed, was I to give an account of the manners of any class of people in this kingdom. I know that such a task is very difficult to a foreigner; and that, even after a long study of any people, we are liable to mistakes. I should, therefore, feel the greatest diffidence, and think myself obliged to speak with the greatest caution, if ever I could prevail upon myself to make such an attempt, especially where I found myself disposed to condemn any general or reigning custom, to censure a whole sex, a whole profession, or any entire body of people.

Mr. Sharp observed, that the Italian nobles do not easily admit to their familiarity those foreigners who are not decorated by some great name or title; and because he was not treated with the regard that his personal merit claims from the nobility of his own country, he gave vent to the most unwarrantable spleen, and spoke of them all in the most poisoned terms that he could possibly find in his language. But was it  
their



their fault, if they were not apprised of his great personal merit? Was it their fault if he was not introduced to any of them.

As to his third disqualification, it is not difficult to comprehend, that a man in a bad state of health is very unfit to make observations on nations, and describe their manners from his own knowledge.

Mr. Sharp went to Italy with a painful asthma that often threatened his life, and once forced him to keep his bed for near two months at Naples: therefore, when ever he reached any town, he stayed at home, and scarcely ever conversed with any native or stranger. I am positive he will not deny, that, in Venice especially, he seldom visited the English resident there, though he makes so free with his name, as to relate a story of him, which I apprehend cannot be true, as I shall prove in due time. But the man who will play the censor upon nations, must give me leave to tell him, that he has need of some other qualifications besides that of a troublesome malady. Together with a good share of understanding, this hard task requires some personal activity, to be able to introduce one's self every where with ease and propriety, and take every where a close view of the privacies of the high, the middling, and the low. A diseased body seldom clothes a chearful mind; and the man not enlivened by chearfulness will seldom get admittance to those privacies; or, if admitted,

mitted, will seldom see objects as they are. His sadness will diffuse itself over every thing he looks on, and all objects will be misrepresented by moroseness and ill-nature, the ordinary concomitants of bad health. Hence Mr. Sharp's asperity and rancour whenever he speaks of what he saw or heard in Italy, where he could not possibly find any honest or knowing man but himself, nor any modest and elegant lady, but those really deserving ones that he took with him from home.

We are therefore not to wonder if a man thus ignorant of the language, of a rank not imposing with regard to the Italians, and afflicted with a dangerous disorder, has not been able to tell many truths, and has caricatured many facts: but we have real reason for surprise, to see him, under these disadvantages, setting confidently about such a work as that of describing a large nation, or rather a cluster of little nations, which differ among themselves not only in manners and in customs, but in government and in laws, and even in dress and in language. We have reason for surprise to hear him talk with the greatest assurance about a country, which he only visited in a cursory manner, stopping only a few days, and often only a few hours, in the greatest part of its cities. Had he confined himself to the bare description of visible objects, or dealt only in representations of inn-keepers, postilions, valets-de-place, and other such people, his work might perhaps have had some

some veracity and some use. But he was for soaring higher, and would paint the Italians of every rank. A daring genius indeed! Yet let me give in the next chapter a small specimen of his strange method of furnishing himself with the necessary materials for his travelling letters, and let me tell a short tale of him, the genuineness of which he will certainly not venture to deny.

## C H A P. II.

**O**NE Signor Giuseppe Baretto (myself I mean) went from Venice to Ancona in the year 1765.

I had been there about three months without ever having had the pleasure of seeing an English traveller go through or by the place; when lo! on a morning betimes, one Signor Cecco Storani came to me in a hurry, and told me, that late the preceding night an English gentleman with three young ladies had put up at the Post-house; and as he did not understand English, he desired I would introduce him to these strangers, that he and his family might show them some civilities.

This Signor Cecco is the son of an Anconitan nobleman, decorated by the pope or the pretender (no matter which) with the title of English consul in that town. The British consulship there is certainly not very profitable in point of interest: but the nobility  
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of Ancona look upon it as very honourable, and they are fond of it, as it gives them some consideration in the place, besides affording them an opportunity of being liberal of their dinners to many strangers, and especially the English, of whom they are enamoured to a degree of enthusiasm.

If Mr. Sharp knew me personally, he would certainly do me the honour to believe me, when I aver that I was much pleased with this piece of intelligence from Signor Cecco. Now, said I, I shall see an Englishman again; and what is still infinitely better, some English women, whose conversation will renew those pleasing ideas, of which I have been so long deprived. But alas, what a disappointment! Though it was scarcely eight o'clock, as far as I can remember, on my reaching the inn with my friend, I found that the gentleman and the ladies were gone. They had got an hour before into their coach, and were hastening towards Loretto, in their way to Rome.

No man in his senses can suppose that a gentleman who travels with such precipitancy along the Romagna and the Marca, is a fit person to meddle with the business of describing the manners and customs of their inhabitants. Yet Mr. Sharp has boldly meddled with that business, for the gentleman who travelled with those young ladies, was Mr. Sharp himself.

On



On his arrival at Loretto the same evening of that day in which he left Ancona, Mr. Sharp sat gravely down to write a long letter to an imaginary correspondent in England, and informed him of *the disadvantages that Ancona lies under, from the infinite concessions made to the church by the commercial and military parts of the nation.* A fine period, and in the true political style! But did Mr. Sharp understand it himself when he had written it? For my part I do not, as I never heard at Ancona of any *commercial or military parts of the Anconitan nation.* The church at Ancona is the absolute temporal sovereign as well as the spiritual: and what *concessions* do absolute sovereigns want from any part of their subjects? It is true, that there are at Ancona many *commercial people*; that is, some dozen of merchants: and it is true there are some *military people*; that is, about two score of soldiers: but neither of these two *parts* of that *nation* do, or can, constitute any distinct political body endowed with any power independent of the sovereign, as the drift of Mr. Sharp's emphatical period imports, when he says, that *they made concessions.* Yet these concessions are *infinite* by his account.

After this woful affair of the infinite concessions, Mr. Sharp adds, that Ancona has a *fine citadel and a mole.* Yet, whatever beauty he may have discovered in a citadel which he did not visit, and of which he only saw  
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some outward part, as he was coming along shore from Fiumicino, I will make bold to tell this skilful engineer, that the citadel of Ancona is not very fine, if the beauty of a citadel consists in the strength of its walls and the regularity of its parts. Then his skimming lightly on Ancona's mole, and coupling it with the citadel, make me suppose, that he heard somebody at the inn mention such a thing as a mole; and so he set the word down in his memorandum-book, that he might not forget to clap it in the letter which he was to write about Ancona that same evening, or next day, at Loretto. But by way of commentary to his text, I will say that Ancona's mole is one of the grandest works now carried on in Europe. It is a wall, if I may so call it, built in the sea, in order to check the impetuosity of the waves, which render that port very unsafe whenever the wind blows from the opposite coast of the Adriatic. As that wind blows very frequently in summer, and almost perpetually in winter, the late Pope began this work, after having declared Ancona a free port. They began upon the small remains of an ancient Roman mole. The present work is to be about two thousand feet in length, if not more; and when Mr. Sharp passed that way, there was already twelve hundred feet of it finished. Its breadth is one hundred feet, and its depth sixty-eight from the water's edge. Many ships loaded with that  
kind

kind of sand called *Pozzolana*, go to Ancona every year from the neighbourhood of Rome, where it is found, and no other sand is admitted in the work, as no other will petrify so well under water when mixed with lime. The stone at first came also by sea from that part of Istria which belongs to the Venetians: but the Venetians, not being willing to permit large exportations of that material for the carrying on a work which was to be detrimental to them in a commercial view, made the Roman government think of other means to provide stone for continuing the mole. A Roman architect, called Marchionne, who has the direction of the work, searched carefully the hills about Ancona, and discovered a quarry of very hard stone, not unlike marble; and by means of his discovery the Anconitans were luckily freed from the necessity of providing themselves with that material from Istria. According to the plan of the architect Vanvitelli, pursued by his able successor Marchionne, this mole is to be very broad at the end, and to have a fortress on it, with a lighthouse. It is adorned with two triumphal arches, one ancient, the other modern. The ancient, which is as well preserved as any piece of antiquity we have in Italy, was erected in honour of Trajan at the head of the mole: the modern is in honour of pope Benedict XIV. Of all this Mr. Sharp had probably deigned to make some

little mention in his letter about Ancona, if he had had the least glimpse of the town. In all likelihood he would also have bestowed a few lines on the Lazaretto lately built there, on a magnificent plan, given by the above-nam'd Vanvitelli \*. It is a pentagon, and a work little inferior to the mole itself: nor would he have forgot to ridicule the Ancona-people for their devotion to St. Cyriacus, their first bishop, who has a very fine sanctuary there.

But Mr. Sharp's chief powers lay in describing customs and manners: therefore after having informed his countrymen of the *infinite concessions* made by a *few* merchants, and by a *few* soldiers, to their sovereign, he falls on the favourite subject of all protestant writers who visit Italy, the *immense poverty* of its inhabitants; and expatiates, with the saddest solemnity, on *the extreme wretchedness of the inhabitants of Ancona and its neighbourhood.*

I should be glad to know how, and by whom, Mr. Sharp got this piece of intelligence, that those inhabitants are *extremely wretched.* The formidable censurer of mother church, that suffers her subjects to be so, probably formed his judgment of them all, by half a dozen country boys and girls, who followed his coach barefooted on the Loretto road, tumbling, dropping down, and

\* Vanvitelli is the Architect who built the royal palace at Caserta near Naples.



kissing the dust from time to time, repeatedly crossing themselves, and singing songs in praise of their Madona, in order to excite his liberality. But such things are common in all countries; and a man need not travel many miles from London, without seeing similar sights, perhaps more indecent in their kind than those on the Loretto road, and indicating a poverty full as blamable in the persons who suffer it, and the police which permits it. Had Mr. Sharp tarried only a single day at Ancona, Signor Cecco Storani and I would have had the pleasure of showing him the town: and whatever *extreme wretchedness* he may dream of in his gloomy hours, I must tell him that he would not have been much troubled by extremely wretched beggars in the town, as I scarce saw one during the six months I lived there, though there are some in the adjacent country. He would there have seen some very good and sightly houses, the inhabitants of which would have treated him and his fair fellow-travellers, not with a Milanese or a Neapolitan profusion, but with elegance, with respect, and with kindness. He would then have, by the Anconitan gentlemen and ladies, been offered some letters to their friends along that unfrequented road to Rome, who would have occasionally accommodated him better than he was at the inns, where his *Vetturino* thought proper to carry him; to which inns few Italians of any note resort, going either to their

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friends,

friends, if they have any, or to convents, where hospitality is seldom denied, as at their departure it is customary to leave a little money for the celebration of two or three masses, by way of compensation for the trouble given to their entertainers. These are the great hardships that Mr. Sharp would have been forced to undergo, if he had stopped a little while at Ancona. At the very worst, I myself, as a kind of demi-Englishman, would have advised him to furnish himself with sheets, that he might not lie on that road in beggarly pilgrim-sheets, and often in no sheets at all. But he is very wrong when he laments so wofully his hard fate, that led him through these two provinces. This wide world cannot all be alike, and its roads cannot all be so pleasant and so convenient for travelling as those of Berkshire and Lombardy. If he had found the road through the Romagna and the Marca quite uncomfortable in point of accommodation, he must partly thank himself for it, as he chose to go but slowly through that, and every part of Italy. Instead of riding it out bravely, and, like a true monied man, with post-horses, which are to be had every where, he hired a voiturin, and agreed that he should carry him, for a certain sum, scot-free as far as Rome, with four jaded beasts that belonged to the fellow. But how could Mr. Sharp be so simple as to strike such a bargain, and submit voluntarily to go  
near

near three hundred miles through such a sandy, rocky, and hilly country with the same cattle? Did he not conceive that by such a bargain he made it the interest of that fellow to take him to the cheapest inns, which is as much as to say the most beggarly, that the feeding of his fair might cost him little? He declaims most tragically against *Italian beds, Italian cooks, Italian post-horses, Italian postillions, and Italian nastiness*. He assures his correspondent, that *he may give what scope he pleases to his fancy, but shall never imagine half the disagreeableness of them*. I will readily admit all this: yet a little obvious good management, and a little extraordinary expence, will make that road, in all parts, tolerable, and, in many, comfortable; because there are many good towns along it, which, by driving post, may easily be reached one after another every night. What signifies his complaining that the fowls dressed for him on the road were bad eating, because killed on his alighting, and immediately boiled and roasted? the innkeepers in that part of the world are not possessed of the art of divination, and he gave them no intimation beforehand of his coming. Would he have them kill part of their poultry every day in the year, when they scarcely see a traveller in a month? This heavy misfortune of not meeting fowl ready killed may happen to him even in England, if he tra-

vels at any considerable distance from London, and out of the most frequented roads. But if the weakness of his constitution, or the delicacy of his taste was such, he might have lighted upon the obvious expedient of taking half a dozen fowls, ready killed, every day, in his coach, and exchanging them from inn to inn, boiling and roasting those to-day, that had been killed the day before.

I do not insist on these points as very material. The description of inns and suppers was what laid most within Mr. Sharp's powers of observation. Neither do I pretend to say, that it was very necessary for him to give an accurate account of Ancona. But when he did speak of that place, it was proper that he should know something of it. But he saw little, inquired less, and reflected not at all; blindly following his travelling predecessors in their invectives against the pope's government. Having lived but six months under that government, though I have not altogether wanted the desire and means of information, I cannot pretend to say how far many of those invectives are founded: but this much truth obliges me to say, that, as far as I could observe, during my residence in Ancona, there has been as much done (and even more) to promote the trade and prosperity of that city, as was ever done for any other place I have visited in my various journies through several parts of Europe.

That



That government made it a free port, by which they gave up some revenue: they were at the expence of a new Lazaretto, the most magnificent building of the kind in Europe; and they have been many years carrying on that expensive work of the mole, to which the revenues of the whole province are appropriated. These are facts; and Mr. Sharp's observations are nothing but loose talk and common-place declamation.

Let me now for a moment return to the inns in several parts of Italy, and say, that what is deficient in them, is, to my knowledge, in some places supplied by the natural hospitality of the people. I must here mention a particular that happened to myself. On my first arrival at Ancona I was not a little surprised to receive some presents of fish, game, oranges, and fruits from several of its *wretched inhabitants*, that is, from some of their best people. They sent me panniers and baskets full of them, with messages that expressed their desire of becoming acquainted with me, as they understood that I intended to stay a while amongst them. This I thought a pretty piece of urbanity; and this is what many people of Ancona do to every stranger who stops any time there. I wish that their encreasing trade may not abate the gentleness of their manners, and the warmth of their hospitality.

## C H A P. III.

**M**R. Sharp came from Sinigaglia to Ancona in a day ; and, though he stayed but one night in each of these two places, yet he decides with his usual peremptoriness, that *Sinigaglia is the only rising town in Italy, and that the occasion of its flourishing condition is the vogue of a fair once a year, which is annually improving.* But this peremptory decision is made at random. As he was going to alight at the inn there, he could not help seeing many houses, and even whole streets, built anew ; and his wonderful sagacity led him immediately to conclude, that Sinigaglia was *a rising town* ; which I grant : but not for the reason he assigns, as the fair he mentions, instead of *annually improving* is *annually decaying*. Sinigaglia owes its rising to its own small port, which having been made better within these few years, enables its inhabitants to carry on a little trade the whole year round. Besides, their being so near the much improved port of Ancona is likewise of some advantage to them, as they can send thither their wheat, turkey-corn, hemp, and silk, of which their territory produces much, and ship these and other commodities for distant markets. But it is not true, that Sinigaglia *is the only rising town in Italy* ; and it may easily be proved that this peremptory assertion is quite impertinent, as there are  
many

many other towns in Italy that have risen within these few years, and rise actually much faster in proportion than Sinigaglia. Amongst these, I will only name Turin, Florence, Leghorn and Naples. Turin is become a full fourth more populous, since the addition of some provinces, made a few years ago, to the king of Sardinia's dominions. Florence and Leghorn encrease both in buildings and inhabitants since their sovereign resides no more at Vienna; and Naples begins to be too monstrous a capital for that kingdom, since it is no more governed by viceroys. If Mr. Sharp had taken the least inspection of Ancona, he would have been convinced that it rises likewise much faster than Sinigaglia. I have had an opportunity of examining the entries of the ships at their custom-house, and have found, that about twenty years ago the Anconitans could scarcely see twenty merchantships in their port: but since their mole is far advanced, they see more than six times that number. Their increase of commerce has already enriched many of their families, and, among others, that of the marquis Trionfi, (or Francis Trionfi, as his correspondents call him) who, by a trade skilfully managed, has acquired in a little time such a fortune, as would enable him to make a figure even on the Change of London. If at Sinigaglia they have built much of late, they have built much more at Ancona, where the no-

blemen do not scruple to become merchants. The marquis Trionfi alone has built himself such a dwelling-house in Ancona, and so many houses besides in various parts of the territory, that the whole together would almost form a Sinigaglia. Of these two towns Mr. Sharp took but a hasty view, as he was going along in his coach, and then said rashly what came uppermost. He talked of the *rising* of the one, and of the *extreme wretchedness* of the other, without knowing a jot of either, having reached them both late at night, and quitted them early in the morning.

However though Mr. Sharp is sometimes mistaken in his object, I will do him the justice of saying, that upon the whole he appears to be a good-natured man; and of a country too, where *good-nature* is so utterly engrossed, that many Englishmen think it even impossible to find an equivalent for the word itself in any other language. Mr. Sharp's immense tenderness shows itself upon almost every occasion. He is drooping with sadness when he crosses any desert spot, and revolves in his mind, that formerly that self same spot was famous for its fertility and populousness. He feels great compassion in surveying the bellies of the fat priests, and the thin guts of the people; and is ready to weep at both from opposite motives: he drops a tear when he considers how ignorant, helpless, and wretched the Italians are; and



and gives vent to many deep sighs as he is reverently kneeling on great Galileo's tomb, who underwent the rack in the inquisition, for having supported a doctrine which is now universally held in Rome herself. There is no end of Mr. Sharp's lamentations and parade of good-nature. But where was his good-nature when he betrayed somewhat like a wish, in favour of the Barbary-pirates, and even gave them a broad hint about the facility of plundering the treasures at Loretto? Had he forgot that those pirates are a gang of Mahometans and Jews, of the very worst kind, to say nothing of Renegado's? It is true, that the Loretto-people are Christians of the very worst kind, in Mr. Sharp's opinion: yet one would think that a good-natured man, and one of the best kind of Christians, could never be pleased to hear of any goods, whether wisely or superstitiously employed, belonging to Christians of any denomination, carried away to Algiers or Tripoli, to promote the happiness of infidelity and the triumph of unbelievers. But good-natured Christians, whether papists or protestants, when influenced by a religious zeal, are often keener in their aversion and hatred than they are themselves aware of: and so the good-natured Mr. Sharp has unwarily shown, that he would not be sorry if those pirates could run away with the Loretto-treasure, and the miraculous Madona into the bargain. Nor did he consider, that if his hints were taken,  
the

the Loretto gold and jewels might enable those plunderers to break the peace with Old England, and put her at the expence of still larger presents to keep them quiet.

Any other Christian, less stimulated by good-nature than Mr. Sharp, would have acted quite differently in his case; and after having taken, from within his coach, so exact a survey of the Adriatic as Mr. Sharp did, he would, on his arrival at Rome, have gone straight to the Pope, and, without mincing the matter, would have told his holiness of the great ease with which the Barbary-pirates could land in that part of his holiness's dominions, and sweep away, at once, all the Loretto gold and jewels; pointing out, at the same time, the means of screening his rich Madona against all attempts of the Africans, and advising the poor old man to remove the Adriatic further off, rather than venture to give them such a triumph over his faithful subjects.

Whatever the sagacity of Mr. Sharp may be on this point, he was not, however, the first who took notice of the great facility with which Loretto might be plundered. Many protestant travellers, full as good-natured and sagacious as him, have spoke of it long before he visited Italy; and the great Addison himself would have the honour of being one of them.

Addison says, that such an enterprize *might prove difficult to the Turks, because the Venetians*

*tians keep too watchful an eye over their motions; but would be an easy thing for a Christian prince, who had ships passing too and fro, without suspicion, especially if he had a party in the town disguised like pilgrims.*

Such are the wise observations the greatest wits are apt to make on their travels, when they inspect countries from their post-chaises, and are otherwise prejudiced against the places they visit.

But if Addison had examined Loretto and the adjacent parts ever so superficially, he would not have exposed himself to the ridicule of those Roman catholics who know something of the matter.

Loretto is a small town, tolerably fortified, that lies on an eminence, near three miles from the sea. The several paths from Loretto to the sea-side, far from being flat and smooth, are all so winding and craggy, that a man needs look how he walks, if he has no mind to dislocate his collar-bone. Between the town and the sea, all along the coast, there are many country-houses, and many cottages of peasants and fishermen; and within an hour's walk of Loretto, on three different sides, there are three towns; that is, Recanati, Osimo, and Camerano, besides many villages and hamlets. Then the sea-coast opposite Loretto is very high, and almost perpendicular, and the sea under it is so full of shallows and rocks, as not to  
be

be approached by any large ship without the greatest danger.

Let us now suppose, that an honest Christian prince, at peace with the Pope, and therefore, as Mr. Addison expresses it, *under no suspicion*, forms the holy scheme of robbing the Pope at Lorétto. A ship is made ready in some distant port, and manned with a numerous, brave and faithful Christian crew. The Argosy sails away, and in so secret a manner, that no soul is apprised of its destination but its captain.

This captain steers towards Loretto, and skilfully pitches upon a dark night to anchor opposite the town, that he may not be discovered by the several guards that watch the coast, or seen by the numerous fishing-boats that swarm there every night when the waters are quiet. He then apprises his crew of the scheme; the boats are made ready; three or four hundred brave fellows get into them; row to shore, and land in the greatest safety. There they clamber up the hanging cliffs in a moment; march to Loretto so closely and so silently, that they are neither heard nor seen; and reach the town without having awaked any body from his sleep. They see one of the gates; and it is plain they want to get in: but how is this to be effected?

I will give it for granted, that the difficult part of this piece of work begins but there. There the merry men attempt to let the draw-

draw-bridge down, and force open the gate; and are saluted by a centinel with a single musket-shot.

The alarm has not been raised before: but now the bells are rung; the inhabitants both in and out of the town get out of their beds, and a garrison of fifty or sixty soldiers (I will not say of more than a hundred) run to their arms. Yet, the merry men throw the draw-bridge down, force the gate open; enter the town; kill the garrison with the inhabitants; and leave neither woman nor child alive, that they may not sling a single stone from window or roof; then they advance to the church. Its gates, or part of its wall, is broke open in an instant: so is the iron-gate of the sanctuary, where the riches are deposited.

Each of the brave fellows is now loaded with a lamp of gold, a statue of silver, or a bag of jewels; and now 'tis time to retire: therefore they go back the way they came, and fight, thus loaded, several thousands of the country-militia, as well as all the inhabitants of Recanati, Osimo, Camerano, and other places, who, encouraged by their priests and friars, are run to defend their beloved Madona. Poor people! they are all presently killed by the merry men; who get then safe on the ridge of the high coast; leap down to the water with their statues, lamps, and bags on their backs; and look for their many boats waiting below.

All



All this, Mr. Reader, may be done with the greatest ease, I own. I am only afraid that those boats will not be quite ready to receive the crew, now quite triumphant. The infernal uproar which has been raised two or three hours before on all sides of the coast, has brought there a great number of fishing-barks, and other vessels; and the people in them, being well acquainted with their own shallows and rocks, have ventured through the bullets fired from the ship, lying at anchor at a good distance; have killed or taken the few that guarded those boats; and, animated by the utmost rage of superstition, stand now prepared to fight the merry men who should attempt to swim over to their ship.

Such would, in all probability, be the success of an expedition against Loretto, if attempted with a single ship, and in a smuggling manner. As to the Addisonian Scheme, of letting some hundred pilgrims into the secret, and keep them ready to open the gates to the assailants on the first signal, that is a very poor scheme, as it would encrease, rather than diminish, the difficulty of the enterprise. No number of pilgrims are admitted together in Loretto, but on two or three great festival days, throughout the year; and on those days there are generally some thousands, whose throats must all be cut by the few treacherous hundred, before any thing else is done.

However,

However, instead of a single ship, we will find a good Christian prince who will send ten, or twenty, or even a hundred. Hey-day! But if Mr. Sharp, in support of his and Mr. Addison's opinion, does not go to convince some Christian prince, that a whole fleet may enter the Adriatic invisible, I must still continue to laugh at their schemes, and think that Loretto is not easily to be plundered but by the disordered imagination of a good-natured protestant traveller.

But it is time to have done with this ridiculous subject, and hasten to the end of my chapter. I have dwelt so long upon it only to shew into what blunders travellers, even of abilities, will be betrayed, when they attempt to write of things, of which they have no knowledge. And yet, they will so attempt to write, and even to lay plans of attacks and conquests, when they have not even the slightest acquaintance with the face of the country upon which they employ their imaginations.

But is it not somewhat melancholy, that Mr. Addison himself, who was otherwise a man of humanity, should be so far carried away by his religious prejudices, as to take a seeming delight in a scheme of downright robbery, and should talk of such a scheme, even for a Christian prince, without shewing the least sense of the injustice of it? That he should almost propose it without the least sign of disapprobation? and that Mr. Sharp, another

ther man of humanity, should be so tickled with it, as to make it a subject of particular merriment, when they both must have known that such a scheme could not possibly be executed without treachery, robbery, and innumerable murders? The superstition of the Italians gives others no right to invade their country, seize their goods, or destroy their persons; and I can never believe that this pious project was ever one of the particulars that has recommended the books of travels either of Mr. Addison or Mr. Sharp to the virtuous and generous English nation.

#### C H A P. IV.

**I** Said above that Mr. Sharp made too free with the name of the English resident at Venice, by telling a story of him, which, because it is not to his honour, I cannot possibly believe to be true.

After having endeavoured to persuade his readers that the Venetian populace, like all others in Italy, are a set of abominable Villains, who *will treacherously stab on the least provocation*; and that the frequency of assassination is to be attributed to the great facility which delinquents have in finding sanctuaries, as *every church and holy place there is a sanctuary, and because of the great remissness, both of law and prosecution*, Mr. Sharp continues thus :

Our

Our late resident in Venice, upon his first arrival there, loudly proclaimed, that should any Englishman be assassinated during his residency, no expence, no intercession should prevent his bringing the criminal to condign punishment. The Venetian common people are all apprised of his resolution; and that no Englishman has been murdered he ascribes to this measure.

How Mr. Sharp could venture to tell such a story I cannot possibly conceive. I have had the honour of being, for a long while, very intimately acquainted with that English resident in Venice; I have a thousand times talked with him about the chearful nature of the common people there, of whom he had certainly no bad opinion, and to whom, instead of being terrible, as Mr. Sharp would insinuate, he had so endeared himself with his affability, that, as he was walking about, they would often stop and bless him loudly. *Caro quel musò; ciera de imperador: festu benedeto: benedeta quella to panza*, and other such hearty and comical expressions he was regaled with, and many times a day; which probably had not been the case, had he threatened them, upon his arrival, by any loud proclamation.

A proclamation, if I understand it right, is a public notice given by means of a crier. But did the English resident give notice by means of a crier, that he would bring to punishment any Venetian who should assassinate an Englishman? No, certainly; because foreign

foreign ministers have no such right in the countries where they are sent to reside, and are, under no pretence, allowed to threaten the subjects of other sovereigns. Did he go himself about the streets and canals of Venice, publishing his intention with a loud voice? No, certainly; because this had been even more ridiculous than the absurdity we combat. Did he apply to the Venetian government with a memorial, and get the proclamation made by their order? No, certainly; because murder is punished with death in Venice as well as any where else; and a bare surmise that it was not, had been highly offensive and intolerably injurious to the Venetian government. Did he only declare his intention privately; that is, to the very few people whom he knew there *on his first arrival*? But how can a private declaration, made to three or four acquaintance at most, be pompously termed a loud proclamation, which apprised the whole body of the Venetian common people of his intention? And how could the resident think that a private declaration, made to a few, would have efficacy enough to fright the whole people of Venice out of their stabbing nature, and think afterwards that it actually frightened them out of it? Let us turn the pretended loud proclamation which way we please, it will always be impossible to reconcile it with common sense and probability. And if it is impossible to make it only probable,



bable, how could any man have the temerity to vouch it as true.

But Mr. Sharp wanted to give a body to the phantoms of his sickly brain. He wanted, in one of his fits of good-nature, to blacken the Italians; and could stick at nothing in order to prove his calumnious position, that our low people are all murderers and assassins. He was not even aware, that by such a false assertion he was bringing in question the consummate prudence and circumspection of an English minister, who, by his wise conduct, has made himself the greatest favourite of the Venetians, both noble and plebeian, and given, at the same time, so much satisfaction to his own court, that he has got himself promoted to a higher employment. It is then an absolute fact, that no Englishman was ever assassinated in Venice, as far as any living man can remember: therefore it could by no means enter that minister's head to guard against any crime of this kind, having no imaginable foundation for apprehending that such a thing would ever happen during his residentship; and he could not have decently thought of any loud proclamation, or even private declaration, but in case it had been an established fashion there to murder Englishmen by way of amusement.

That every murderer is punished in Venice with death, it would be highly ridiculous to set earnestly about proving; and Mr.  
Sharp

Sharp may perhaps have heard, that a very little time before his arrival there, one count Nogarola of Verona was publicly put to death in Venice for murder. It may be true, for aught I know, that a man was hanged at Naples, as Mr. Sharp tells us, for having assassinated an Englishman. But I cannot, without difficulty, believe him, when he adds, that the English envoy there was under a necessity of being *extremely active in bringing that criminal to the gallows*; and that the same envoy gave up five or six murderers who had taken sanctuary within the privileges of his walls; that *they were clapped in gaol, and yet found means of being discharged the next day*. Mr. Sharp deals so largely in big words and exaggerations, and his fondness for the marvellous betrays him so often into misrepresentations, that I wish he had added such circumstances to his stories, as to render them probable at least. His reflections on the Italian government imply such atrocious accusations, that he ought to have taken more care to prove his assertions. It is, for instance, a gross misrepresentation his saying, that the church *throughout Italy* shelters murderers and assassins. In the Venetian dominions, as well as in some others, no church is a sanctuary for such criminals; and in many places, though the church be a sanctuary for petty debtors, it does not even screen bankrupts. But to point out every place, in which the church is, or is not, a sanctuary, and

and to note down all the different kinds of crimes for which the church (where it is a sanctuary) allows or denies a shelter, would be too prolix a detail in the great variety of Italian governments. I therefore say drily, that in the Venetian dominions, the church is no sanctuary at all, and that in Piedmont the church allows shelter not even to bankrupts, though it does to petty debtors; and this is enough to prove that Mr. Sharp has been guilty of misrepresentation on this particular subject. And when he tells us, that at Florence *his eyes were tired with the view of an assassin who had taken refuge on the steps before a church*, I must still suspect, what is very possible, that he calls by this name some pickpocket, or some simple robber, because I know that the common people at Florence, as well as throughout the world, are often ignorant of the true import of words, and will often call *assaffino's* even pickpockets and runaway debtors, as such people are often called in England by the general titles of rogues and villains. Mr. Sharp, not being apprised of the popular meaning of the word *assaffino*, may have mistaken the fellow on those steps for a murderer. However I give this only as a conjecture of mine, grounded on Mr. Sharp's ignorance of our language, on his gross carelessness of enquiry, and on the malignant propensity which he betrays at every turn, of presenting every thing in Italy in the worst light.

Mr.

Mr. Sharp expatiates, in very emphatical terms, on the great readiness with which the common people of Italy draw their knives and stab one another. He goes even so far, as to call the Neapolitans in particular, *A nation diabolical in their nature*, tho', forgetting himself here and there, he acquaints his readers, that the Neapolitans *behave peaceably* on many occasions, where the common people of England would be outrageous. But how far he is right or wrong in his account of the general nature of the Italians, I will tell him in the next chapter, and will endeavour to give a truer idea of our common people than he could possibly form in his short ramble, totally unprovided, as he was, of sure means of information.

## C H A P. V.

**T**HE common people are far from being all alike throughout Italy; and there is, for instance, a very remarkable difference between those at Naples and those of Bologna; those of Rome and those of Venice; those of Ancona or Florence, and those of Milan, Turin, or Genoa. However, upon the whole, they are, in general, humble, courteous, loving, and of a friendly disposition. They are civil to such a degree, that in towns they will always take care to give the wall to any body who has a tolerable appearance,

appearance, and pull off their hats, in the country, whenever a gentleman goes by. Treat them with kindness, and call them often by their christian names, and you may depend upon their most sincere attachment. Instead of having any antipathy to strangers, they are fond of them to an unaccountable degree. *A stranger* is no very honourable appellation in England. In some parts of Spain, and still more in Portugal, it is opprobrious: but in some parts of Italy, *A stranger* means *a fine fellow*; and in some others, *a wise man*: I mean always amongst the common people. Let any body with a foreign dress or accent speak in their hearing, the Italians will imperceptibly steal near, and listen with attention to his words; then go home and tell their wives, children, or friends what they have heard; and seldom omit, in the warm elation of their goodness, a little embroidery of their own, in commendation of the stranger. They are credulous, because they are ignorant; and ignorant they certainly are to a great degree, as few of them can read or write. They are cheerful for the greatest part; which does not imply a cruel disposition or temper; and love singing, fiddling, and dancing so passionately, that, after church on holydays, no master or mistress must think of having their young maids or footmen at home before night, as they will absolutely go where there is a dance, generally in some field or other open place



adjacent to their towns or villages; and there keep their legs in motion in the merriest manner till sunset. The men, on such occasions, pay the fiddles, giving some money to them before they begin their minuets, furlana's, ciaccona's, or corrente's. As such dances are constantly kept in the eyes of the public, you may be sure that the women put always on their modestest looks; nor would any married woman be found there, if her husband was not of the party. This is general. But it is so hard to say any thing universal of Italy, that I must say *en passant*, that dancing on holydays is not permitted, or not common, in the Pope's dominions.

The Italians are no rioters, and hate confusion; and they are, for the greatest part, total strangers to the idea of sedition; so that they scarcely ever rise against government, not even in time of the greatest hardships. Few of the Italian nations will suffer themselves to be seized by a violent and general rage once in a century, except at Naples, when the want of bread grows quite insupportable; but in the Venetian dominions, in Tuscany, in Lombardy, in Piedmont, and in other parts of Italy, I never heard of the least popular insurrection. When they meet in large crowds, they do not turn insolent and ferocious, as it often happens in other countries; and Mr. Sharp himself took notice of vast multitudes, which behaved with such composure and quiet, that he could not help wondering;

wondering; and he owns that it had not been the case in London, where, when a large body of the common people come together, *some are seen quarrelling, some fighting, some laughing, one half of them drunk, and all noisy: and to complete the confusion, two or three dead cats will be hurled about to one another.*

When the Italians go to any opera, or play, or any other public spectacle, they applaud if they are pleased; and, if not, they talk to their acquaintance when they have any by, or keep silent; and never hiss or pelt the actors, and never throw any thing into the orchestra or the pit, totally unacquainted with the brutal manner of annoying or hurting those, who neither annoy nor hurt them. At Venice only there is a custom no less nasty than infamous, that of spitting from the boxes into the pit. This custom certainly arose from the contempt that the haughty nobles originally had, and have still, for the people. Yet the people suffer most patiently this insult; and, what is still more surprising, love those very nobles who treat them in such an outrageous manner; scarcely giving vent to a little anger with some short and comical exclamation, when their hands and faces feel the consequence of this beastly custom.

The Italians are so tender-hearted, that they will shed tears at any mournful story; and when any criminal is executed, you will

see the stoutest amongst them weep most cordially, pray most devoutly, and give what little money they can spare to have masses celebrated for the repose of the poor suffering soul : and I think, that sometimes I called them fools for being so much affected on such occasions ; though I own I could not help sympathising often with men, whom Mr. Sharp is pleased to call *diabolical in their nature*.

It would be endless to tell how our common people are hospitable to strangers, serviceable to one another, and liberal of whatever they can spare to the necessitous ; still keeping up the old friendly custom of presenting each other a little bread when they bake ; sitting, walking, chatting, singing, dancing, or working together, always in good humour, and always pleased when in company. They are most rigidly religious ; or most foolishly superstitious, as Mr. Sharp would phrase it ; nor would they ever dare to go to bed, without first saying loud their rosaries over, or singing their litanies, the whole family together kneeling before an image : never missing their masses and benedictions morning and evening every holyday ; making their confessions and communions generally once a month ; beating their breasts in the fervour of their devout ejaculations ; never breaking lent or meagre days, if they are well ; and if they are ill, never without asking first leave for so doing of their ecclesiastical

stical superiors. Their religion is carried to superstition undoubtedly; but still they are religious.

However, though the common people of Italy be thus humble, courteous, peaceable, chearful, hospitable, compassionate, and religious, they have, on the other hand, such quick feelings, that even a disrespectful word or glance from an equal will suddenly kindle a good number of them, and make them fall upon one another with their knives. I say from an equal; because from a superior, that is, from one who has the appearance of a gentleman, they will bear much before they let their passion loose, being from their infancy accustomed to a very strict subordination. When a gentleman happens to see any of them quarrelling, he usually steps between without incurring any danger, and if he cannot part them directly with expostulation, he will do it by raising his cane upon them both, and have the thanks of the bystanders for it. But if no gentleman interposes, they will not be cooled in haste, and some mischief will be done; especially if there is any matter of love at bottom, which is generally the only great source of quarrels amongst our common people. In matters of love they must mutually beware how they deal; for he that has first declared himself the *inamorato* of a maiden, must have her all to himself; nor will he brook



to hear a rival play on the guitar, or sing songs at night under her window without his previous leave, which however is always granted when asked; and the asking, as well as the granting, considered by both parties as a civility to be returned upon occasion. Without that previous leave, the resentment of a common Italian flames out, and is not limited to his rival only; for, if he has room to suspect his mistress of fickleness, after she has given her consent to his courtship, she will be herself in danger. However the reader must not think that girls in Italy are frequently stabbed by their sweethearts, because, in general, they pique themselves of as much fidelity to their lovers as their lovers to them. Yet the case comparatively speaking, will happen in Italy oftener than in any of the countries I have visited; and it actually happened in the neighbourhood of Ancona while I was there, that a young peasant got himself into the gallies by giving a dangerous blow to a pretty wench; and enquiring after the opinion that people of their rank had of this affair, I found, that both men and women were, upon the whole, rather favourable to the fellow, who had given her no motive for fickleness, and thought his sentence too hard; not pitying the girl much, as she had proved a jilt.

This touchy temper in our low people I am far from commending. Yet, if any thing was to be said in extenuation of the few



few crimes that it causes, one might say, that as soon as a common Italian has set his heart upon a maiden, she is sure, when married, that he will do his best as long as he lives to maintain her, and never swerve from his conjugal fidelity.

And here I must remark, that whatever Mr. Sharp may affirm of the unparalleled indolence and sluggishness of the common people in Italy, a point which he knows in his conscience he never was at the trouble of examining, I may affirm, on the contrary, that it is not uncommon to find in the cottage of an Italian peasant the implements of agriculture along with the net and the loom; and that a great many of them are, at once, husbandmen, fishermen, and weavers. See them work in the field, or any other place, they will redouble their diligence if they perceive that you mind what they are doing. There is a spirit of glory, or, if you please, of vanity in them, which I have not observed in Englishmen of the same class: and when you depart, they will never do as peasants and all sorts of working people do in England, where they so very frequently ask you something to drink. The Italians ask nothing; and the greatest part of them would refuse, if you were to offer; and even desire you not to mistake them for beggars.

Mr. Sharp has taken notice, that *the whole face of Tuscany is covered with farm-houses and cottages, which are not as in France or in Eng-*

*land, thatched huts with walls of mud ; but built with stone or brick : that the peasantry looked florid, lively, contented, and are smartly dressed.* If Mr. Sharp had looked carefully through other parts of Italy as he did in Tuscany ; or rather, if in other parts of Italy he had met with such judicious gentlemen as his friend the abbot Nicolini, (who having been a long while in England, knew which way to turn an Englishman's eyes) Mr. Sharp would then have seen the peasantry live much after the same manner in the Venetian provinces, in all Lombardy, in the state of Genoa, in Piedmont, and even in some districts of the papal and Neapolitan dominions.

Mr. Sharp puzzles himself in searching for the reason why the Tuscan peasants live, in all outward appearance, well, and dress smartly ; and is pleased to dream, that *their air of opulence is derived from the time of the Medici's family* ; being loth to attribute the effect to its true cause ; that is, to their sobriety and love of labour. If these are not the true causes of *their air of opulence*, we must think that each peasant in Tuscany has inherited an estate, which is come down to him unimpaired from a progenitor, who got it in the happy days of the Medici's family ; which supposition would be too absurd. Sobriety and love of labour make the peasants of Tuscany live in the manner Mr. Sharp saw them live ; (if it is true that he

he has minded them;) and if many of the Genoese peasants inhabit houses that are often mistaken for gentlemen's habitations, it is to be attributed to a degree of both these qualities in them, which is almost incredible. They will cut flat a sharp rock; cover it with earth, fetched sometimes from a considerable distance; and there plant a vine or fig-tree, or sow it with fallad at least; so that it is proverbial there, that *the peasants eat stones* (*i contadini mangiano sassi*) alluding to this piece of their husbandry. I have seen peasants in Italy work even part of the night in their vineyards and fields by moonshine, while their wives and children were asleep; and, by the bye, I have taken notice of the same thing in the kingdom of Arragon and in Catalonia: and yet the Spaniards in general are most mercilessly run down for the greatest idlers and sluggards, by many such accurate travellers as Mr. Sharp. But since Mr. Sharp has brought me on the banks of Arno, I beg of him to let me take notice, that his account of Tuscany does not quite agree with that of bishop Burnet. Burnet says, that *as one goes over Tuscany, it appears so dispeopled, that one cannot but wonder to find a country that has been a scene of so much action and so many wars, now so forsaken and so poor, that in many places the soil is quite neglected for want of hands to cultivate it; and in other places, where there are more people, they look so poor, and their houses are such miserable*

ruins, that it is scarce accountable how there should be so much poverty in so rich a country, which is all full of beggars. And a few lines after, *All the way from Florence, through the great duke's country, looked so sad, that I concluded it must be the most dispeopled of all Italy.* Here is a picture! and how well do these travel-writers contrast with each other! But let us come back to our diabolical assassins, as Mr. Sharp expresses it.

I own, and agree, that murderers in Italy are not brought quickly enough to punishment, through a want of activity in their prosecution. Excepting Piedmont, where justice, in case of murder, is exerted with tolerable dispatch, in all the parts of Italy I have visited, the execution of the laws is too remiss, in my opinion; and in Venice and Rome most particularly, where a criminal of this kind is kept many months in gaol before his trial be over.

But there is an invincible cause why in Italy some murderers will sometimes avoid the gallows; and this is, the facility of escape out of the state where they offend.

Every body knows that Italy is parcelled out into many sovereignties. A criminal, who happens to be a little distant from the centre of any of them when he commits his crime, needs but run a little away, to be out of the circumference too. And how can the magistrates, be they ever so vigilant,



lant, send after people, who in a few hours are quite out of their reach.

Then an Italian is not so easily arrested as an Englishman; for, when he is conscious that he will be hanged or sent to the gallies, if he falls into the hands of justice, he will not peaceably surrender to any man unarmed, but will fight in his own defence most desperately till he dies. The English have lately had an instance of the Italian fury in such cases; and cannot, as yet, have forgot the terrible resistance made by two Italian sailors, that broke from Maidstone gaol. Then our people, from a mistaken principle of humanity, and still more mistaken point of honour, will not play the *sbirris*, or *catch-poles*, and give the least assistance to the officers of justice in the execution of their duty; and you might sooner bring an Italian to suffer martyrdom, than force him to stop any man pursued by them. The magistrates are therefore obliged to send many of those officers, or *sbirris*, well provided with fire-arms, in quest of runaway delinquents. The assembling and directing a troop of those officers cannot often be done in a moment; and in the mean time a criminal hastens away towards a neighbouring state. It is true that the Italian sovereigns reciprocally give up their criminals to each other, if they are caught; and count Nogarola, who had made his escape into Piedmont, after having committed a murder in Verona,



Verona, was arrested near Turin, and sent to the Venetians, who put him to death, as I said already. But a very little reflection will show any thinking man, that this expedient cannot be of any great efficacy against this evil, in a country constituted as Italy is.

These remarks ought not to have escaped Mr. Sharp, when he spoke of the great facility with which murderers often avoid punishment in Italy, and not cast his oblique reflections upon all our magistrates indiscriminately, as if they were guilty throughout Italy of the greatest supineness in the most atrocious cases.

It happened once in Venice, that a baker was found near a man who had been stabbed. A knife was sticking into the corpse, and the baker happened to have a scabbard in his pocket which fitted that knife most exactly. Upon this the poor fellow was condemned and hanged, though quite innocent of the murder, as it was proved a little time after his execution. From this accident, a custom arose in Venice\*, that before sentence was passed upon any convicted criminal, an officer, appointed for that purpose, cried to the judges, *Ricordatevi del povero fornaro*, *Remember the poor baker*. Hence the judges in Venice, and in many other parts of Italy, are not easily satisfied with

\* This custom lasted many centuries; but of late it has ceased, which is ought not to have, in my opinion.

proofs, though ever so evident, when a man's life is at stake; and hence the general slowness of prosecution, and long delays of punishments, as we are early taught, that we never can be too cautious in pronouncing about life and death. But strangers will easily indulge their vanity, and make a parade of wisdom, by finding fault, taking very seldom the trouble of investigating the reasons of things. Mr. Sharp has then no other standard for his judgments but his own country. Whatever in any other country is not done after the manner of England, you may be sure he will directly, and with surprising sagacity, find out to be wrong, abominably wrong. But tho' his way of arguing may prove him a very good Englishman, yet it will not intitle him to any just claims to the character of an impartial observer of other countries. And tho' some Italian may sometimes be apt to give a stab to his rival or to his mistress in a fit of angry jealousy, yet Mr. Sharp had no reason to represent the common people of Italy as having all the diabolical nature of murderers. To be *naturally inclined to murder*, implies a disposition *naturally cruel*. But the Italians are not of a disposition *naturally cruel*. On the contrary, they have undeniably some of those characteristics which cannot absolutely subsist with cruelty; namely *cheerfulness* and *compassion*. Therefore they are *not naturally cruel*, though their quick feelings may make some of them resent an injury

injury with an act that has the appearance of cruelty. They shudder at murder, as well as the common people of England, or any other common people. By Mr Sharp's outrageous logic, an Italian would have a right to call the people of England all incendiaries, because he happens to read sometimes in the Gazette of rewards offered for the discovery of the authors of anonymous incendiary letters. What a number of bitter reflections would he have cast upon us, if he had happened to hear in Italy of a daughter poisoning her father, a niece her uncle, or a wife her husband? If he had heard of four thieftakers infernally combining so, as to bring fifty or sixty poor devils to the gallows, for the sake of a paltry reward, and not one of them put to death by public justice, for want of a law pointing out that particular case? If he had heard of a man murdering his concubine, though with child; or of an elderly matron beating to death some little girls, that she might rob an hospital of a few pounds? Yet such shocking accidents will happen amidst the best and most polished nations: and writers must be looked upon as very disingenuous, when they attribute to the general character of nations the few hellish doings of a very few individuals. No society could long subsist, if the plurality were horribly wicked, and *diabolical in their nature*.

Let me then conclude this chapter with observing, that I have now been for seven-  
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teen years a constant reader of the English news-papers: that in this long space of time more than ten thousand English (masters and servants) have been running up and down Italy, and the greatest part of them certainly not the best men that this country produces with regard to morals and prudence. Yet can any of my readers recollect of having ever read in the news-papers of any Englishman *treacherously murdered* in that land, so famous for its frequent murders and customary assassinations? Would this have been the case in any country, if ten thousand Italians, flushed with youth and money, and lovers of the bottle into the bargain, had run up and down it, with scarcely any other view but that of giving themselves up to all manner of lewdness and debauchery.

## C H A P. VI.

**I**F the low people of Italy are by no means indebted to Mr. Sharp for the character he has drawn of them in his good-natured way, those of rank are still less beholden to him upon the same account, as he has likewise insisted that, both male and female, they are all plunged in the most vile and shocking immorality.

His manner of introducing his subject is really artful enough. He sets out with informing his readers, that *in ancient days wives were immured in Italy, and husbands were jealous*;



*lous; but that no women on earth are now under so little restraint as those of Italy, where the word jealousy is now become obsolete*

I shall leave to others the trouble of examining how justly this fine proem squares with the notions that philosophers entertain of the origin, progress, and effects of our natural passions; nor will I attempt to prove, that love, and its attendant, jealousy, as well as all other human affections, are pretty equally distributed amongst mankind, and their consequences pretty uniformly the same wherever there are men. I might as well set about proving that lions and rats are only lions and rats in particular districts, and that they are cats and owls in other places.

Let me then only inspect into that vast treasure of customs and manners, with regard to matrimony, brought over to England by Mr. Sharp, together with his vast collection of murders and assassinations.

In Italy then, according to this acute observer, *every lady that is married has a cicisbeo; that is, she has a young gentleman, whose chief employment is that of dishonouring her husband whenever she chooses. A cicisbeo is kept by every lady for this purpose; and in so notorious a manner, that every body who knows her, knows him of course likewise.*

The cicisbeo, besides this noble employment, is obliged to sit with her alone in the opera-box, hardly seen by the spectators, as the opera-



opera-houses in Italy are very dark: and after the opera, he is to have a *tete-a-tete* at her *casine*, where they stay sometimes the whole night, taking mass in the morning in their way home. The *casine* is a room \* hired (Mr. Sharp forgot to tell whether hired by the *cicisbeo* or the lady) at a distance from the lady's house, and hired for the whole year. A *casine* is always sacred to the lady and her *cicisbeo*; and the lady's husband never approaches it. Was the husband ever to visit it, he would be laughed at by every body, because in Italy it is so ridiculous for husbands and wives to be seen together, that there is no instance of such a phenomenon. Should any married lady think of being true to her husband, and be averse to the taking a *cicisbeo* into service, she would be obliged to live for ever at home, and no other lady would ever dare to appear with her any where. The republic of Venice is a second Cyprus, where all are votaries to Venus. There parents have very little fondness for their children; there the boys are looked upon as children of the republic, and there their girls are early sent to convents, where they are seldom or never vi-

\* Mr. Sharp has never entered a *casine*, otherwise he would have said, that it is an apartment of many small rooms, and often a whole small house, taken, for the sake of convenience, by the Venetian noblemen, in the neighbourhood of St. Mark's, where the senate and all the magistrates assemble, and where every thing of business or pleasure is transacted.

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*fied by fathers and mothers. The cicisbeo's are partly slaves and partly tyrants to their ladies; and the ladies are as jealous of their cicisbeo's, as, in other countries, of their husbands. It is impossible to refrain from laughter, seeing men of the gravest characters going to the casino: men that you would have suspected of hypocrisy, superstition, and fanaticism, rather than of gallantry.*

One would think, that, after having gone so far with such a description of the manners and customs of a country, a writer might stop, and even begin to be afraid to pass for a drunken slanderer, even in the opinion of the most credulous. But Mr. Sharp, far from harbouring any such unmanly fear, only fetches his breath a while; then goes on most undauntedly, and with still greater and greater ferocity. He has even the boldness of protesting in a most solemn manner, that his assertions *are to be depended upon, and true, upon his honour, as he speaks upon good grounds, and not from a spirit of detraction.*

*The affection between husbands and wives (continues Mr. Sharp) in the climate of Italy, is an unknown passion. In Italy men and women are always tied together in wedlock without the least participation of their own; and it happens very seldom that the parties know one another before marriage, seldom visiting twice before the day of consummation, the bride being to that moment locked up in a*

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convent. *There* (that is, throughout Italy) the abominable and infernal fashion of taking a *cicisbeo* into service immediately after having quitted the altar, is the cause that estranges all matrimonial affection. *There* children have very little tendency to support the friendship and harmony of the married state, as the certain knowledge every husband has of his wife's attachment to a lover, extinguishes all social love and fondness to the offspring. *There* young unmarried ladies are never invited to any dinner, as their innocence and sprightliness is a pleasure utterly unknown, or neglected, in Italy. *There* a husband is sure, that the eldest born only belongs to him, provided he has been born in the first year of his marriage. Should one half of the married ladies deny themselves *cicisbeo's*, or live innocently with them, the other half would despise them. I have seen myself at Naples (where he never entered a single nobleman's or gentleman's house) princesses and duchesses, with their *cicisbeo's* at their sides, visiting their friends with the greatest unconcernedness. When you invite five ladies to dinner, you lay ten plates of course, as each lady brings her *cicisbeo* with her. The nature of the climate makes husbands so fickle, (this he was told by a grave Neapolitan gentleman, a great meteorologist, I suppose) that they cannot continue constant to their wives many months; so that the poor women are driven into this measure of taking *cicisbeo's* into service.

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This is the picture Mr. Sharp has drawn of the customs and manners of Italy; and to give it the last stroke in the true Michelangelo way, he concludes, that *the distinction of good and bad; that is, of chaste and dissolute, is hardly known there; and that the generality of ladies in Florence have each of them three cicisbeo's; the first, called the cicisbeo of dignity; the second, the cicisbeo who picks up the gloves and the fan when the lady drops them; and the third, the substantial cicisbeo.*

I should certainly have been surprized at the temerity of these remarks, if I had not been made acquainted with the manner by which Mr. Sharp came by his information. At Naples, it seems, he got a very fine fellow for a temporary servant, whose name was Antonio. A true temporary servant, fit for any Englishman on his travels.

This Antonio, who, by what I have heard of him, piques himself much upon his good education, upon his extensive knowledge of men and manners, and upon his having written comedies, as he says, full as good as Goldoni's, was the chief oracle consulted by his good master about the customs and manners of Italy.

Mr. Sharp enjoyed, as I said, very little health all the time he was at Naples, where he wrote the greatest part of the above ribaldry about husbands, wives, and cicisbeo's, As he knew no native there, and seldom saw any of his countrymen, the clever Antonio  
was

was almost the only person, besides his family, that he could converse with. With Antonio therefore he used to closet over night, and hold a private conference of some hours. When the conference was over, Antonio went down to the kitchen, and there entertained his fellow-servants with the Account of the book that his master was composing with his assistance. "How? A book with your assistance?" "Yes, upon my honour," replies Antonio; "and my master listens eagerly to what I tell him of our lords and ladies; and holds his quill in his fingers, and suspends my talk every minute, that he may make memorandums of every particular I relate; but be sure I tell him nothing that is dishonourable to our country, as I am, you know, always an Italian in my heart \*."

Out of those noble memorandums it is very probable that Mr. Sharp formed his itinerary letters, not entertaining the least doubt about the abilities and veracity of his valet-de-place; and thus was he led into an immense chaos of inconsistency and absurdity well deserving to be exposed, as it is by

\* What Antonio had occasion to tell often to his fellow-servants at Naples, he freely repeats now in England. I never saw him to this day, *October 16, 1767*; but his affirmations came some months ago to my knowledge, as well as to that of almost all the Italians now in London. Antonio, I hear, is but lately come from Italy with a new English master.



no means pardonable in a man of his age, of his character, and of his knowledge.

That Mr. Sharp had at Naples this Antonio for a servant, I am sure he will not deny; and he will not deny neither, that he used to closet often with him, his quill in his hand for some hours, taking down memorandums of what the fellow was pleased to tell him. Mr. Sharp will perhaps deny his having got the chief things he has said about cicisbeo's from Antonio, though he held his pen while Antonio prattled away in their nightly tete-a-tetes. But how will Mr. Sharp be able to convince any sensible man, that he had from higher people than Antonio, the unnatural and impossible things he has told in the passages quoted above from his book? How will he be able to persuade, that there is a vast tract of land in a Christian country, where some hundred thousands of husbands are most regularly and most infamously wronged by their wives immediately after marriage? That this is a fashion? That those husbands know for certain they are thus treated, and yet put up with it most unconcernedly, and with a perfect acquiescence, only withdrawing their *social love* from their wives, and their *paternal tenderness* from their children, continuing however to live with them under the same roof?

Husbands and wives in Italy use no separate beds, not even in the hottest months :  
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this is a notorious fact. How then can any reasonable person be brought to believe, that all the husbands of a large country, or those of the better sort only, (if Mr. Sharp will have it so) are so utterly insensible to honour, as to receive to their beds the warm harlots just come from the casine towards morning? And how can he make any one believe, that some hundred thousands of wives become all harlots immediately after having quitted the altar? And that this happens in a country, according to his own account, overwhelmed with bigotry and superstition, which implies an exuberance of religion? And that this happens in a country, where women (still according to his own account) are all shut early in convents, where it is to be supposed that religion is the chief ingredient in their education? What? No religion in women who have been taught almost nothing else from their childhood to the years of matrimonial maturity? No fear, no shame, no modesty, no continence in that part of mankind which nature has originally made fearful, shameful, modest, and continent? And then no jealousy, no anger, not the least resentment in men, made originally by nature so proud, so irascible, so impetuous? Ha! Nothing but an infamous prostitution on one side, and nothing but a perfect apathy on the other? And this in a country famed for the quick temper and hot imagination of its inhabitants? And Mr. Sharp will have it a  
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*phenomenon never seen there*, that of a husband and wife shewing themselves together in public? And that wicked wives will think themselves dishonoured by keeping company with good wives? If this is not all Antonio's stuff, whose stuff can it be?

But pray, good Mr. Sharp, is this the true course and general progress of nature? Or are the men and women in Italy of a different species from those of other countries? You may answer in a sober hour, that nature is pretty uniform every where, and that the Italian men and women are just such creatures as the men and women of other countries. But if they are of the same species, how do they come to act so diametrically opposite to all the men and women of all other countries in marriage; that is, in the most critical business of life? In a business, which interests the generality of human beings infinitely more than any other? You answer again, that *it is the climate which makes all Italian husbands fickle*: and do you not see, my British philosopher, that you attribute to the climate a power of making so many automations of human beings, and that you are absurd beyond absurdity in saying so? That Antonio himself would blush with shame, if he was accused of being so pitiful a reasoner on human nature? But if the climate makes so many automations of the Italians, and if their affections and actions are in the power of the climate, and not in their own, to what end

end do you represent them as most abominably wicked, and endeavour, with all your might, to raise an abhorrence of them in your countrymen? You might as well have endeavoured to render odious to them all those peculiar productions of Italy, which owe their existence to that climate. I can allow, without any great difficulty, that the generality of the ladies in England behave with more reserve and circumspection than those of Italy: and I can easily be brought to believe, that neither the opera nor the play, neither Ranelagh nor Vauxhall, neither Almack's nor madam Cornely's, can taint, in the least, the purity of English female virtue, and throw any lady off her guard. I will even allow, that Venice in particular is a town infinitely more corrupted in point of chastity than London itself; and that in Venice, as well as in a few other capital towns in Italy, there are some women of rank, who have forfeited all claim to the title of virtuous by their unconcealed debauchery. But while I allow this, Mr. Sharp must likewise allow me, that the ladies of those towns in Italy, who have rendered themselves infamous in the eye of reason and of religion, may easily be named in every one of those towns: and the easy possibility of naming them implies, that their class is not very numerous. Mr. Sharp must allow me farther, that the number of the ladies who keep their character unstained, is so large, as to render his general accusations a vile heap of calumnies.

Add to this, that whatever the manners may be of a few ladies (or of many, if Mr. Sharp will have it so) in a few of the large towns of Italy, yet the ladies in the small towns all over the country are neither better nor worse than those of the small towns all over Europe, where the want of sinful opportunities, the infrequency of bad example, the fear of idle tongues, the facility of detection, together with other motives of a higher nature, which operate more in small than in large places, keep women in very good order.

Had Mr. Sharp been able to make such reflections, he would certainly have been aware, that the character of a numerous nation does not depend on a few individuals scattered about half a dozen large towns; but that it depends on the many millions contained in two or three hundred small ones, and in their territories. Had Mr. Sharp said, that such a *gentildonna* in Venice, and such a *principessa* in Naples are universally pointed out there for their immoral conduct, I might quickly have agreed with him. But when Mr. Sharp makes use of collective terms; when he says *the Venetian ladies, the Neapolitan ladies, the Florentine ladies*, and, what is still worse, **THE ITALIAN LADIES**, he must give me leave to tell him, that he vomits slander all the time he thinks himself speaking oracles; for in the corrupted city of Venice itself, there are very many ladies



ladies possessed of the most exalted virtue. It is true that they are not commonly known to the English travellers: but was Mr. Sharp by, I could name to him some of the best female beings that ever adorned his country, whom I myself brought acquainted with some Venetian ladies, who certainly gave them no reason to be ashamed of their acquaintance.

And how could then Mr. Sharp affirm, without taking shame to himself, that no Italian parent loves his children, when I am sure he has seen innumerable times innumerable Italian fathers and mothers handing about their little ones, prettily dressed in various fanciful ways, and seen them oftener than in any other part he ever visited? Burnet says that *the Italians have a passion for their families, which is not known in other places*; and his observation is certainly just, as in the corrupted city of Venice itself the graver sort of people often find fault with the general fondness of parents, even those of the highest quality, because they take too much delight in leading their boys and girls about St. Mark's square, dressed like little hussars and sultana's, or like little shepherds and shepherdesses, and carrying them themselves from house to house. The reproaches that our numerous fond parents often hear upon this article, are justly grounded on the danger of making those boys and girls too early in love with shew and parade, with

dress and vanity. And how could Mr. Sharp say that the pleasure of maiden innocence and sprightliness is utterly unknown, or neglected, in Italy? Did he not see that this affirmation is incompatible with nature, as it implies a degree of brutality in a nation, whose predominant character, according to his own and all travellers accounts, is love and sensibility of heart? And how could he say, that young folks in Italy see one another but once or twice before the celebration of their marriages, when in Venice itself it is a general custom, even among the chief nobility, to delay intended nuptials many months, and sometimes a whole year, that the young couple may conceive an affection for one another? Just a little before Mr. Sharp's arrival in Venice, an intended marriage was suddenly broke between a young lady of the Barbarigo's, and the eldest son of the Procuratoressa Zen, (two of the greatest families there) though the parties had been betrothed a full twelvemonth, though all the wedding-preparations were made, and though the very epithalamium was printed and ready for publication: and this happened for no other reason but because the bride took a disgust to the young man for his neglecting to court her with the usual daily regularity. These, Mr. Sharp, these are the customs in Venice with respect to marriages; and marriages in all other towns of  
Italy

Italy are contracted just as they are in all other Christian countries. The great generally marry for the sake of alliance or interest, without much consulting inclination; and the little do as well as they can, exactly as people do in England; nor is it true, as Mr. Sharp affirms, that we put all our girls in convents, and keep them there until they marry, as I shall prove in another place. For shame then, Sir, thus to mistake for indisputable facts all the nonsense and waggyery of your temporary footman in Naples! it was your clever Antonio, without any doubt, who made you write down in one page, that *the Neapolitans never dine together, and that there is no such custom as to invite each other to dinner*; then in another page, that *at Naples when you invite five ladies to dinner, you must lay ten plates of course, because each of them brings her cicisbeo with her*. How could you be so dull as not to see, that Antonio led you here into a flat contradiction? And how could you suffer yourself to be plunged by him into an ocean of nonsense, and set upon paper the story of the three cicisbeo's at Florence, the substantial, the dignified, and the fan-picker? You meant with your book to make the Italians ashamed of their country; but I am much more ashamed of you, Sir, who could swallow such stories, and yet walk upon two legs as well as any of them.

## C H A P. VII.

TO all the above charges of ill-nature, of absurdity, of falshood, and even of downright calumny, Mr. Sharp will perhaps plead, that he gave a good word to the Roman ladies (in favour, I suppose, of his gentle friend the marchioness of Ceva); that he did obliquely let us understand, that they are *the chastest women in Christendom*; and that *even their cicisbeo's are suspected to be innocent*. Mr. Sharp may urge besides, that he has also protested, in the mildest terms, that *it hurts him a little that his accounts should seem severe*; (*slandorous* had been a properer word) and that he desired his correspondent to *remark, that his censures regarded only the morals of the lower people, and the gallantry of the great*. But to these benign answers, which really imply some sort of recantation, I must reply, that whenever in his book he says any thing in favour of the Italians, he skips it over with two or three lines, which have no effect upon the mind of his reader, and cannot cancel the horrible idea he has given them of the Italians: but when he speaks in their dispraise, he searches carefully for the harshest expressions that his language can afford, in order to destroy even the little effect that his few and meager praises could have produced. In order to persuade his countrymen, that Italy is the most abominable

able country in the world, and that its inhabitants have more than one standing system of wickedness and iniquity, he heaps accusations upon accusations, and derision upon derision, in a hundred pages. What then signifies his gently saying here and there, that the Italians are sober, that they are peaceable, that they are civil to strangers, or other such things? What signifies his saying, that the cicisbeo's of the Roman ladies are suspected to be innocent, when he has already given his honour, that throughout the dominions of the Venetian commonwealth every individual is a votary to Venus? when he has already given us to understand, in a hundred places, that all married ladies throughout Italy are adulteresses? What signifies his telling in one page, that his censures regard only the morals of the lower people, and the gallantry of the great, if in another he insinuates, that in Italy there are few or no people of a middling condition? What signifies his commending, towards the end of his book, in a line or two, the pleasantness and fertility of the country from Bologna to Turin, when he has already exerted his utmost eloquence in order to make us believe, that the whole of Italy is uncultivated and unpeopled, and that even the climate of Naples is worse than that of England? Mr. Sharp is guilty of many fallacies of this kind, partly through ignorance, partly through carelessness, and partly thro' malignity. I had heard of him long before



my last visit to my native country, from some of my friends, who are likewise his friends; and his name was one of the English names that once I most respected. But I am sorry to say, that the reading of his book has forced me to change my opinion, and that he has forfeited with me that character of goodness and candour which I had formerly conceived of him, as his performance is absolutely not that of a good and candid man, but the production of a mind unjustly exasperated against a people, whose individuals either knew him not, or, if they knew him, treated him with benevolence and civility, as they do all the English, and all other strangers who visit their country, without any narrowness on account of different tenets, though they be in general much attached to their own.

## C H A P. VIII.

**B**Y the several passages above quoted out of Mr. Sharp's book, and by many more which it is needless to quote, it plainly appears, that to the word *cicisbeo* he annexes the idea of an *adulterer*, and that he makes both words perfectly synonymous. But Mr. Sharp is certainly wrong as usual, as the Italians are far from giving such a definition of that word. *Cicisbeo* is a cant term, which originally signified no more than a *whisperer*. E-  
very

very body that knows Italian but tolerably, must know, that the letters *b* and *c* occur very frequently in it, followed by an *e* or an *i*. This frequent occurrence of *be* and *bi*, and of *ce* and *ci*, is the cause that when a person whispers, it seems that he does almost nothing else but repeat such syllables. Hence *to whisper* is now *bisbigliare*, and was formerly *cicisbeare*. And because lovers and intimate friends are apt to whisper, the displeasure that whispering in company always gives, procured them the appellation of *cicisbeo's*, that is *whisperers*. So much for the harmless etymology of the word, which we may easily conceive how, in process of time, came to be indifferently bestowed both upon lovers, and upon those who, in all outward appearance, act as such, attending on ladies with as much attention and respect as if they were their lovers.

The Italian custom of almost every man attending on a lady with a lover's attention and respect, is then of a very old date, and not a late introduction into our manners, as Mr. Sharp insinuates, when he says, that our women *were formerly immured*, and that *now they are under no kind of restraint*. A spirit of gallantry, derived from the ages of chivalry, much heightened and refined by the revival of the Platonic philosophy in Italy about the thirteenth century, and still much cultivated in our universities, and in our numerous poetical academies, has been so long

incorporated in our manners, that almost every polite individual, in the southern parts of Italy especially, is actuated by it in some degree. Witness the celebrated volume of Italian verses by Francis Petrarca, whose amorous, and yet most chaste Platonic sentiments for the beautiful Laura, have rendered him the most favourite poet of Italy for these four last centuries; and witness the catalogue of his imitators, which would amount to many thousands if it were exactly made; amongst whom many famous names would be included, as those of Angelo Poliziano, Lorenzo de Medici, Pietro Bembo, Monsignor Della Casa, Jacopo Sannazzaro, Annibale Caro, Bernardo Tasso, Torquato Tasso, Eustachio Manfredi, and a great many more both ancient and modern. Let us listen to the Arcadians of Rome, or let us read the collections published on almost every marriage of the great in Italy, and you will find them abounding with sentiments of chaste Platonic love. Almost all the polite Italians imbibe such sentiments as soon as they acquire the power of reading, and learn that *the contemplation of earthly beauty raises an honest mind to the contemplation and love of the heavenly*

There is no need now to enter into the discussion whether these Platonic notions be true or false, ridiculous or reasonable. It is sufficient to our present purpose, that such notions are very universal in Italy; that they  
are

are adopted and continually disseminated by the Italian poets, or by those whom the Italians commonly call poets; and that they have been adopted and successively disseminated through Italy, both in common speech and in writing, both in prose and verse, for these four hundred years at least. Open but the collection of our minor poets, chronologically, compiled by Agostino Gobbi and his continuator, in six or seven octavo volumes, thickly printed, and you will find a long succession of them, from the earliest beginning of our language to our very days, who have uninterruptedly rhimed to such notions. Hence that reverential idea which almost every polite individual in Italy entertains of female beauty: hence that custom, almost universal, of kissing in a most humble manner our ladies hands when we enter their rooms: hence that other custom, almost universal likewise, of our servants bearing the train of their mistresses when they walk on foot: and hence the power that every polite woman has amongst us, of commanding as many adorers as she lists, who love her with this kind of mystic love, and never disunite the idea of her beauty from that of her virtue. Those adorers, from the vulgar that know little or nothing of all this Platonic stuff, (call it so, if you please) have got the appellation of *cicisbeo's*, which appellation, however, though bordering upon the ludicrous, never implies the

the least disparaging reflection either upon them or the ladies; so that any body, without the least fear of offending, may not only bestow it on men, but on women likewise, and enquire after the constant attendant on a lady, or after a lady constantly attended, by the words of *cicisbeo* and *cicisbea*. *Che fa il vostro cicisbeo, Signora? How does your adorer, Madam? Come siete in grazia della vostra cicisbea? How are you in the good graces of your lady?* If such appellations were any way offensive, one may easily imagine, that the Italians would not have them as common in their mouths as the English have those of *bumble servant, friend, adorer*, and other such in their familiar speech.

By this account, which I could make still more circumstantial, were I not afraid of proving too tedious, it may be seen that Mr. Sharp knew nothing of the matter, when he set about his remark on our *cicisbeo's*, as he had not the key to our general customs and manners, which is, and never can be other, but a thorough knowledge of our language, and perfect acquaintance with our poetry. Not being able to comprehend, in the least, our peculiar way of thinking, through his utter ignorance of what he ought not to have been ignorant, when he assumed the character of our censurer, he has not been able to account for what he saw or heard. Following therefore the lead of many other impertinent travellers who had preceded him



him in the tour of Italy, he fell upon us in a most brutal manner; reviled our husbands for a pretended infamous acquiescence in the general prostitution of their wives; gave for indubitable that general prostitution; and attributed to the Italians a downright system of the most abominable immorality. Was any body to translate his work into Italian, my countrymen would strangely stare in reading so much illiberal abuse and ferocious declamations on them and their manners, and many of our ladies would certainly wish him for a while under the tuition of some good exorcist.

There have been within these three centuries many such accurate observers as Mr. Sharp, who have given accounts of Italy: but none of them have ever taken the least notice of what I have here enlarged a little upon, except a Frenchman, of whom by and by; and Milton in his imperfect attempts to write Italian poetry, in which one may see, though confusedly, that he had got a little glimmering of our peculiar notions about female beauty. Had he made any stay in Italy, and thoroughly mastered the language, as he would have done in a little time, our Platonic conceits about love had certainly not escaped his sagacity. As to the Frenchman, he is the anonymous author of a book entitled, *Memoires pour la Vie de Francois Petrarque, tirés de ses Oeuvres et des*

*des Auteurs Contemporains*, and printed at Amsterdam so late as 1764, in two volumes, quarto.

It may be said in commendation of the French, that they wrote a great deal about Italian language, Italian literature, Italian politics and Italian customs and manners, from Henricus Stephanus, down to monsieur de Voltaire inclusively, and that not one of the many who handled these subjects, was ever so lucky as to be once right, whether he blamed or praised. But the anonymous author of these *Memoires* has at last made us pretty good amends, as he has expatiated very much on the same topics, and yet is but seldom wrong. Having resolved to write the life of Petrarch, and translate his Italian poetry into French verse, this author perused a vast number of our books, both Italian and Latin, not caring whether they were good or bad, and in general esteem or sunk into oblivion. By these means he made himself such a master of our manners and customs, that in my opinion no writer, either foreign or Italian, within the compass of my knowledge, knew better than him whatever has been relative to them for these four hundred years. Amongst the peculiarities which distinguish our nation from others, that of the Platonic notions about love and beauty did not escape his observation; and endeavouring to clear his favourite author from the imputation of a lawless passion

passion for his beautiful Laura, who was a married lady, he makes, amongst others, the following very learned and very judicious remark.

“ On le trouvera peutêtre encore moins  
 “ coupable, si on veut bien jeter un coup  
 “ d’oeil sur les mœurs du siècle dans le quel  
 “ il vivoit. L’amour n’étoit pas alors ce  
 “ qu’il est à présent un arrangement de  
 “ convenance, ou un commerce de liberti-  
 “ nage. C’étoit au contraire, une passion  
 “ honnête qu’on regardoit comme le plus  
 “ puissant mobile qui remua les cœurs, et  
 “ le plus capable de les porter à ces grandes  
 “ actions de vertu et de courage qui ca-  
 “ ractérisent les grands hommes.”

In English thus: “ *Petrarch will be found*  
 “ *still less blameable, if we but cast a glance on*  
 “ *the manners of his age. Love was not then*  
 “ *considered, as in our days, a mere matter of*  
 “ *convenience, or a commerce of libertinism. It*  
 “ *was, on the contrary, looked upon as a laud-*  
 “ *able passion, as a powerful mover of the heart,*  
 “ *and as the greatest inducement towards a dis-*  
 “ *play of that courage and virtue which is ne-*  
 “ *cessary to characterise heroes.*”

And a few lines after: “ Les hommes de-  
 “ pravés ne pourront pas croire que l’amour  
 “ ait jamais été un commerce pur de galan-  
 “ terie et de tendresse dont on n’ent point  
 “ à rougir. Cependant rien de plus vrai.  
 “ C’est sous cette forme que nous le voyons  
 “ représenté dans les ouvrages qui nous re-  
 “ stent

“ stent du siècle de Petrarque. Le cavalier  
 “ le plus discret avouoit en public la beauté  
 “ à qu’il osoit adresser ses vœux et l’hom-  
 “ mage de son cœur. Le poete le plus mo-  
 “ deste nommoit dans ses vers la nymphe qui  
 “ lui servoit de muse. La dame la plus hon-  
 “ nête ne rougissoit pas d’être l’objet d’une  
 “ passion epurée, et d’y repondre publique-  
 “ ment.”

“ *Depraved men will not easily be brought*  
 “ *to believe, that love may be an innocent com-*  
 “ *merce of gallantry and reciprocal affection,*  
 “ *of which no one need to be ashamed. Yet no-*  
 “ *thing is more true. It is under this form*  
 “ *that we see love represented in the works still*  
 “ *extant of Petrarch’s age. The discreetest ca-*  
 “ *valier owned publicly the lady whom he dared*  
 “ *to love and honour. The most modest poet*  
 “ *named in his verses the fair who inspired*  
 “ *them; and the chasteest lady never blushed to*  
 “ *be the object of a guiltless passion, nor scrupled to return it publicly.”*

Such were the Italian manners in Petrarch’s time, and such they have, in a great measure, continued to this day, if we will not stubbornly reject the authority of subsequent writers, and spurn the testimony of all our living rhymers and versifiers.

I think it is the witty Voltaire who has said, that the present English are quite different from those of Cromwell’s time. But this was said in ostentation of acuteness and gratification of malignity, as the modern Eng-

English have still the same temper that they had in the times of Cromwell. It is not in the power of a few ages to change utterly those general customs that have been long settled, or subvert the universal manners of large nations. The Muscovites are forced by a law to be very polite at Petersburg and Moscow, where the gentlemen cut their beards, and the ladies paint. But travel through the inner parts of their empire, and you will find that the Muscovites of to-day differ but little from those that preceded Peter the Great. Thus the Italians are still nearly the same as those that lived three or four centuries ago. The generality of them still know very well how to keep love and vice asunder; and though at bottom their passions be still the same with the rest of mankind, yet with them (to express it after the above anonymous Frenchman) the heart and the senses have different routs, and their objects are seldom the same. The Italians know how to make a difference between an ordinary woman and a polite lady, to whom they surrender their hearts. The one is a mere woman, who may remind them of the common calls of nature: but the other is a sublime being; a divine sovereign of the thoughts; an object of the greatest reverence, never to be approached but as an angel clad in human form.

Had Mr. Sharp been acquainted with our language and poetry, these parts of our character,



rafter, instead of exciting his resentment, would only have made him smile: instead of running, in a most outrageous manner, against our *cicisbeo's*, who in civil language we call *cavaliers* and against our *cicisbea's*, whom we term *dama's*, he would only have had the pleasure of displaying his wit, and would have made his countrymen laugh, not at the deformity of our vices, but at the childishness of our conceits. And yet this had not totally debarred him from falling very sarcastically upon many of them, who, forgetful of their ancestors' ways, and their methods of adoring the fair, carry on the most lawless passions under the deceitful veil of guiltless friendship; sheltering themselves under the shade of Platonic bowers, which ought to be for ever sacred to innocence and purity.

But while I am honestly telling Mr. Sharp all I know of this part of our conduct, of which I certainly must know more than he, having myself been, in my bright days, both a *cicisbeo* and an humble imitator of Petrarch's poetry; and while I set open a new door for him to rush forth and discharge his spleen at the immorality of the higher order amongst us; let him still keep in mind, that the failings of an inconsiderable number of individuals are never to be considered as national corruption; and that a small hellish gang of Englishmen, who once cut off the head of one of their sovereigns, conferred no right upon foreigners to call the collective

tive body of this loyal nation a set of fanatical regicides.

## C H A P. IX.

**A**FTER the two heavy charges of *murder* and *adultery*, Mr. Sharp loads the Italians with that of *superstition*. It is strange to hear him, in the height of his wisdom, revile them for keeping a great many festival days throughout the year, and how desperately angry he is with the innumerable *rareeshows* exhibited every where throughout their towns, villages, and hamlets without exception.

To understand well what Mr. Sharp means by his pretty word *rareeshows*, I must give my curious reader a short sketch of our customs, of which Mr. Sharp has declined to give an account.

Know then, that on Sundays, and other holidays, of which we have a good many, in almost all places where there is any church adjoining to a cluster of houses, our priests are used, both in the morning after the great mass, and in the afternoon after the vespers, to dress themselves in *pontificalibus*, and make a procession.

This procession is formed by little less than all the inhabitants in the neighbourhood. The good creatures, as soon as they see the priests ready, quickly join in pairs, men with men, women with women, and children

children with children. The cross precedes, and the priests follow them; and the procession is closed by a wooden crucifix, a Madona, or some tutelary saint placed on a large and heavy scaffold, and born by some of the most lusty of the company, who are always willing to sweat under the enormous weight, having a notion that the carrying it about does a deal of good to their souls. The priests generally have lighted torches in their right hand, and those of the people who can afford it, have wax-candles. As soon as the image is lifted up from one side of the church, where it is placed on holidays, the priests, with the most sonorous voice they can fetch, begin to sing a psalm, or the litanies, or some other thing, in Latin; and the people that form the procession, knowing those things by heart, though none of them understand a word of Latin, answer by turns to the singing of the priests. In this order, and with this noise, formed by a good many discordant voices, the procession makes a large tour, and then returns to the church. There the *rareeshow* ends with a benediction given by the curate, or some other priest of the parish; after which, if the evening be not rainy, the old and the young divide. The old go and sit down to chat among themselves; and the young run as fast as they can to some known place, where a dance is presently set a going, as the fiddlers  
always

always take care to be there beforehand. There they caper away till they are tired, and generally till it is time to go and get a bit of bread and cheese by way of supper.

These processions are the very capital *rareeshows* exhibited through Italy, and most particularly in little towns and villages; and against these many protestant travellers have vented a good deal of religious spleen. They are all, as well as Mr. Sharp, very angry at such *rareeshows*; and all firmly of opinion, that all processions are very foolish, very absurd, very idolatrous, very impolitic, and every way ridiculous and detrimental. Their arguments against these are indeed so strong, as always to have puzzled my logic whenever I attempted to prove them harmless; and always forced me to think, that instead of going about in procession on holidays, our people would do much better to get into inns or brandy-shops, and there get most gloriously drunk, and swear, and quarrel, and talk politics or religion; or else pick up some chance-girl, and so fit themselves for a few months retirement in some such place as the Lock-hospital.

However, as something may always be said pro and con in every contest, I have a mind to discuss a little this affair of our *rareeshows*, and offer Mr. Sharp a few reasons in their favour, when considered, not in a religious, but in a political light.

Yet

Yet before I launch into this difficult disquisition, I must put him in mind of two things: the first is, that the Italians in general are at least as robust a race of mortals as any in Europe; and the second is, considering the extent of Great Britain and that of Italy, that the Italian is a much more numerous nation than the British.

There are a great number of very wise mortals in this metropolis of England, who taking up their notions from the Farinello's and Guarducci's they heard melodiously warbling in the Haymarket, are ready at all times to assert, that the Italians are in general a very puny people, because the heat of the climate makes them perspire their vigour away. And it is not long since a most grave man, who is both a physician and a knight, reminded me of the effeminacy of Capua, which was the destruction of the great Hannibal and his valiant soldiers; and yet those same soldiers were born and bred in the warmest climates of Africa.

In spite however of these very wise mortals, I take it for granted that Mr. Sharp will not much contest with me the first of these two points. He has observed, that in Venice *men are remarkably tall*; and tallness generally implies strength and vigour of limbs. *Look at any class amongst them, says he, and you will find a very few short men amongst them.* He has observed likewise at Naples, that the men *seemed in his eyes more robust and athletic*



*athletic than the run of mankind in London.* These two observations are almost the only ones on this subject, that escaped from his pen in some unguarded moment; and I wonder how he could suffer them to escape, considering his invincible reluctance to grant any advantage, though ever so small, to the Italians, when he brings them in competition with the English. However he said as much of the Venetians and the Neapolitans, adding even, that *the Neapolitan porters will carry still greater burdens than the English porters.* As to the rest of the Italians he has been silent, and neither spoke of their labourers, nor of their soldiers, nor of any of those other classes of people, whose trades require strength of body. But as he did not tax them any where in his book with feebleness and effeminacy, I take it for granted that he was ashamed to strengthen the falsely received opinion, that the Italians are a womanish race of people, only fit for fiddling and singing, because they are born under too warm a sun.

Mr. Sharp may perhaps be willing to contest the second point, and deny the superiority of populousness of Italy, when compared to that of Great Britain, as he must be sensible that he has woefully deplored the unpopulousness of many spots there, which in the days of old Rome swarmed with numberless human creatures; and to give a ponderosity to his arguments, he may perhaps  
quote

quote the respectable authority of bishop Burnet, who, though a native of Scotland, said *It is amazing to see the desolation of Italy, and how miserably it is unpeopled.*

Nevertheless, in spite of the desolation and depopulation observed by the bishop throughout Italy, and by Mr. Sharp in a few parts only of the papal and Neapolitan dominions; let Mr. Sharp first consider, that the whole superficies of Italy is not larger than the superficies of Great Britain; and then let him remember that he has given us *a list*, which he had reason to believe authentic, *of the inhabitants of Tuscany*, who according to that list (exclusive of the state of Lucca) amount to *nine hundred and forty odd thousand*, though Tuscany be scarcely the twelfth part of Italy, and though it be, for the greatest part mountainous, and consequently thinly peopled when compared to Piedmont, Lombardy, and many other flat provinces in several parts of our peninsula. Then let him recollect the populousness of the whole Italian coast for about sixteen hundred miles, and remember in particular that streak of habitations on the border of the Ligurian sea, from Nice to Genoa, which part of our coast is one hundred and twenty miles in length; and yet looks like one continued town through all that space, containing ten or eleven towns, and about threescore villages, besides a vast many clusters of houses between those towns and villages.

lages. Let him recollect what numberless habitations, scarcely interrupted by empty spaces, are on either side of the vallies of Ponsevera and Bisagno, which reach from Genoa to the foot of the Bocchetta, for about twenty miles. Let him recollect how thick are the towns and villages throughout the king of Sardinia's dominions, and in Piedmont especially, which, though a large province, looks almost like one single city. Let him recollect what a number of towns, villages, and houses may be seen from Turin to Milan, and from Milan to Venice: how numerous are the people of Chivasso, Crescentino, Trino, Casale, Vercelli, Novara, Bufalora and Magenta; and then those of Lodi, Cremona, Pizzghitone, Gera d'Adda, Bozzolo, Mantova, Bergamo, Brescia, Verona, Vicenza, and Padua, all lying almost in a line of little more than two hundred and thirty miles, with a great many considerable villages and little towns interspersed. Then let him recollect, in the pope's dominions only, that row of towns from Bologna to Macerata; that is, Bologna, Imola, Faenza, Forli, Forlimpopoli, Cesena, Saviniano, Rimini, Cattolica, Pesaro, Fano, Sinigaglia, Ancona, Camerano, Loreto, Recanati, and Macerata, which are all in a line of little more than a hundred and fifty miles, and all surrounded with populous territories. Let him then turn back towards Lombardy, and look on the num-

berless towns and villages scattered all about the Monte di Brianza, just under the mountains of Switzerland, perhaps the most populous and the most delightful province in all Italy, and yet very seldom visited by English travellers. Let him then consider the small, but thickly inhabited, states of Lucca, Parma, and Modena, and the infinite number, scarcely known to the world, who live on the long range of the Apennines, for the space of about six hundred miles; among which there is a small nation, never mentioned by any English traveller, betwixt Verona and the Alps beyond Roveredo, where a language is spoke of unknown origin; which nation is supposed by the marquis Maffei, in his *Verona Illustrata*, to be descended from the Cimbri, defeated by Marius. Then let Mr. Sharp give me leave to inform him, that I have been assured by his friend, the late English resident in Venice, that the Venetians have more than two millions and a half of subjects in Italy only, though the Venetians amongst the Italian sovereigns hold but the fourth rank. Add to all this, the king of Naples' dominions, which take up near one third of Italy, exclusive of Sicily. From this account let Mr. Sharp, if he can, strike out a calculation, approaching to exactness, and he will find, that it would be ridiculous to compare the numbers contained in Great Britain with those of Italy; where, upon a moderate computation, and exclu-

five

five of its three great islands, (Sicily, Sardinia, and Corfica) there are very near fourteen millions of people; when in all Great Britain, that is, in England, Wales, and Scotland, it is said, that there are little more than seven millions\*.

\* Many Italians pretend that Italy contains more than sixteen millions of people. However the following is an account of its inhabitants, as far as my best enquiries could go:

The king of Naples, exclusive of Sicily,	3,800,000
The pope, —————	1,350,000
The grand duke of Tuscany, according to Mr. Sharp's list, leaving out the odd numbers, —————	940,000
The republic of Lucca, — — — —	140,000
The duke of Modena, —————	330,000
The duke of Parma, — — — —	330,000
The Venetians, — — — —	2,600,000
State of Milan, — — — —	1,060,000
State of Mantua, — — — —	170,000
† The king of Sardinia, exclusive of Sardinia and Savoy, — — — —	2,700,000
The republic of Genoa, exclusive of Corfica, — — — —	470,000
	<hr/> 13,890,000

† In 1729, Keysser reckoned two millions only, exclusive of Sardinia: but it must now be considered, that since Keysser's time, a large tract of Lombardy, and a large part of Montserrat, have been added to that king's dominions. Then agriculture, and especially the planting of mulberry trees, has been greatly encouraged within these forty years, which has increased its populousness considerably.



Having stated these two points, I will now say something of the *superstition* of the Italians, and of their *festival-days* and *rareeshows*, which include not only their frequent processions, but their high and low masses; the great ornaments bestowed on their churches; their ceremonies at christmas, in the holy week, at easter, and on many other occasions; the various and rich accoutrements of their priests, of all ranks, from the pope down to the curate, when on their duty; and numberless other things of this kind, which render religion grand and magnificent in its outward appearance, especially in the ravished sight of our common people, who are those that most want to be impressed with awful ideas.

With these rareeshows, which are certainly superstitious in a great measure, the Italians have been reproached ever since the great schism that took place in the Christian religion about the time of Henry VIII. This reproach has been handed down to us from one protestant traveller to another; and they have all expatiated, if not with great wisdom, at least with great asperity and mockery, on the folly of those Italian politics, which allow of such enormous intervals and means of dissipation. Nor has any of these all-knowing politicians ever seemed to entertain the least suspicion, that there can be arguments produced in favour of these festivals and rareeshows, and such arguments too, as will

will overbalance theirs, at least with regard to such practices which are certainly derived from those of the Romans, who, like the modern Italians, were very superstitious, and as fond of festivals and rareeshows as their successors of to-day. But dunces feel so rapturous a joy when they can make a parade of their surprising quickness in finding out glaring absurdities among their neighbours, that it is no wonder if they are always ready to represent their customs and manners in a ridiculous light. You may tell dunces, that general customs form themselves by imperceptible degrees, and that, when they are formed, it is not only extremely difficult to alter them, but extremely dangerous even to attempt it. They will still go on with mockery upon mockery, and with declamation upon declamation; and every new attempt to bring them to reason is but a renovation of their absurdity.

However, to give Mr. Sharp some small notion of Italian politics relative to *rareeshows*, he must permit me to inform him, that the late Pope Benedict XIV. once offered all the Italian princes an utter abolition of all holydays, Sundays excepted; which offer procured him the appellation of *Papa protestante, the protestant Pope*.

Had that abolition taken place, it would certainly have demolished a large portion of those superstitious rareeshows so nauseated by protestants in general, and by Mr. Sharp in

particular. But, after long debates and consultations, every one of those princes rejected his holiness' offer, and chose rather to go on in the old way.

The reasons urged for accepting the offered abolition may easily be guessed by any shop-keeper in England, let him be ever so dull. We have lately got in Italy a pretty numerous set of young gentlemen, who can talk as glibly about political matters as any old member of the Robinhood society, and descant, with as much eloquence and perspicuity, upon arts, manufactures, and commerce, as any British grocer or haberdasher of them all. Our young men of quality not only read Voltaire, Rousseau, the marquis d'Argens, Montesquieu, and other modish French writers, but likewise many English books translated into Italian from the French. By means of such studies, it is inconceivable how our young men of quality increase in wisdom and scepticism every day.

Counsellors of this cast, we may well suppose, when the great question concerning the offered abolition was agitated, launched out, with great force of ratiocination, upon " the  
 " prodigious advantages that would infalli-  
 " bly accrue to arts, manufactures and com-  
 " merce, by exploding those useless and  
 " noxious festivals; upon the large additions  
 " which might be made to the present stock  
 " in trade, by the united labours of several  
 " millions of hands in the space of forty or  
 " fifty

“ fifty days gained by the abolition every  
 “ year ; and on the strong probability of un-  
 “ derfelling our neighbours at foreign mar-  
 “ kets in a very short time, which would  
 “ quickly make us masters of the whole  
 “ commerce of the countries round, give  
 “ us numerous fleets in a few years, and ren-  
 “ der the Italian name respectable once  
 “ more to the whole world.”

After having opened this enchanting pro-  
 spect, we may likewise easily conceive, that  
 those young counsellors pointed out with  
 great acuteness of observation, “ the innu-  
 “ merable evils produced by idleness, the  
 “ great parent of vice ; and enlarged most  
 “ pompously on the inexpressible happiness  
 “ which a nation enjoys, whose poor are so  
 “ industriously inclined as to employ every  
 “ moment of their time in incessant la-  
 “ bour.”

These and other such astonishing argu-  
 ments were probably confirmed by the ex-  
 ample of the English in particular, “ who  
 “ by their unparalleled industry and natural  
 “ love of labour, are all become very rich  
 “ and very happy, the greatest part of them  
 “ being lords and squires, who not knowing  
 “ what to do with their bags of money, run  
 “ in shoals about the world to scatter it away,  
 “ and especially about Italy, where, amongst  
 “ other satisfactions, they obtain that of  
 “ hearing songs, sung in the truest taste, and  
 “ of

“ of contemplating the mossy ruins of ancient  
 “ Rome, together with the half-defaced  
 “ works of Michelangelo and Raphael.”

But now, Mr. Sharp, let us turn the leaf, and see what is contained in the next page; that is, let us hear the answer given to those learned and wise counsellors by an old fashioned staunch Machiavelian, and his reasons against accepting the offered abolition.

The fellow began his speech with this old, very old observation, that, “ *the plurality*  
 “ *must needs be ever poor let their industry be*  
 “ *ever so great, and their labour ever so incessant.*” He then went on in this strain :

“ If this be true, as it is without doubt,  
 “ that labour is the gréatest murderer of  
 “ men, as it appears by the short space that  
 “ the laborious part of mankind live, when  
 “ compared to the long time lived by the  
 “ idle, why should we be so uncharitable as  
 “ to shorten the lives of our countrymen with  
 “ an increment of fatigue? What is there in  
 “ the world that deserves the getting, if it  
 “ must be got at so dear an expence? Pray,  
 “ gentlemen, what do we want farther than  
 “ what we have? Does not Italy, one year  
 “ with another, produce corn for us all? It  
 “ certainly does, since we send many ship-  
 “ loads of it to Spain and Turkey when the  
 “ crop proves tolerable, besides furnishing  
 “ Switzerland with almost all the bread that  
 “ is eaten there? Then Italy produces a  
 “ great



“ great deal more wine than we could possi-  
 “ bly drink, if we were all turned into spon-  
 “ ges. We have cattle enough to furnish  
 “ the whole peninsula with meat: we have  
 “ horses, asses, and mules in abundance:  
 “ the whole land swarms with fowls, both  
 “ wild and tame; and the sea, which en-  
 “ compasses us on three sides, and our rivers  
 “ and lakes, are very liberal to us of very  
 “ good fish. As for cheese, we have such  
 “ quantities, and so good, that all the nati-  
 “ ons of Europe will taste of it, as likewise  
 “ of our Bologna sausages, and macaroni’s,  
 “ and vermicelli’s, and other such good  
 “ things. Then we have very luscious  
 “ grapes, and melons, and apples, and pears,  
 “ and figs, and plums, and oranges, and  
 “ lemons, and all other sorts of fruits in an  
 “ astonishing abundance. Our gardens give  
 “ us cabbages, and sallad, and all kinds of  
 “ pot-herbs twenty times more than we  
 “ need. You all know what prodigious  
 “ quantities of oil we send abroad, besides  
 “ what we use at home: you all know what  
 “ plenty of good rice some of our provinces  
 “ yield, and turkey-corn, and chefnuts, which  
 “ make up the chief food of our low people.  
 “ You know what quantities of beans and  
 “ peas, and other kinds of pulse, we may  
 “ consume of our own growth. Our moun-  
 “ tains yield near as much iron and copper  
 “ as we want, besides so much fine marble  
 “ of all sorts, both for use and ornament,  
 E 5 “ that

“ that we might build new cities, if we  
 “ thought it necessary. We have no need  
 “ of buying any kind of timber from a-  
 “ broad, as we have oaks, and elms, and  
 “ fir-trees, and walnut-trees, more than our  
 “ carpenters will ever want, besides black  
 “ and red ebony, and many other fine woods  
 “ for cabinet making. We have fewel for  
 “ firing, flax to make linen, and hemp e-  
 “ nough to hang us all, if we had a mind  
 “ to it. We have wool enough to cloath all  
 “ the lower part of our people, and hides  
 “ and skins enough for our shoes and gloves;  
 “ and a thousand other blessings, for which  
 “ we ought to be thankful; and above all  
 “ the nations in the world, except perhaps  
 “ the Chinese, we have an immense quanti-  
 “ ty of silk. which our ground produces eve-  
 “ ry where. This article alone, good Sirs,  
 “ is more than equivalent to all the super-  
 “ fluities which our present general luxury  
 “ and corruption makes us dream we want  
 “ from other countries. Our silk alone  
 “ will procure us coffee from Arabia, sugar  
 “ from Martinico, pepper, cinnamon, cloves,  
 “ and nutmegs from the East-Indies; pil-  
 “ chards, herrings, and salmon from Fal-  
 “ mouth, Yarmouth, and Carrickfergus;  
 “ and as much gold and silver from Peru  
 “ and Potosi as will facilitate all kinds of  
 “ mercantile business among us; and yet the  
 “ balance of trade be still in our favour.  
 “ We have already so much tobacco of our  
 “ own

“ own growth, that if we improve a little  
 “ farther the cultivation of it, we shall in  
 “ a little time want no more either from  
 “ Virginia or from Salonicchio. What then,  
 “ in the name of confusion, do these gentle-  
 “ men want more? What need have we to  
 “ increase our natural riches with papal a-  
 “ bolitions? Are we not a nation numerous  
 “ enough, and as strong and as healthy as  
 “ any other nation? And what do these  
 “ beardless gentry talk about the English,  
 “ and bring their example to support their  
 “ ultramontane reasoning? The English,  
 “ we allow, are a very ingenious and in-  
 “ dustrious people, as we see by their  
 “ cloaths, their watches, and their Birming-  
 “ ham-wares. They are a people that hate  
 “ idleness as much as they hate the French  
 “ and the Devil. But is it positively true,  
 “ that they are all lords and squires, be-  
 “ cause they hate idleness and love hard  
 “ work? Yet, suppose this was true, what  
 “ would it signify? What business have we  
 “ to make lords and squires of all our poor?  
 “ Is it not better for them to live a long  
 “ life in idleness, than to be for a few years  
 “ labouring lords, and hard-working squires?  
 “ Then our idle poor propagate much fas-  
 “ ter than the laborious English, if it be  
 “ true, that the country of the English,  
 “ though somewhat larger than ours, scarce-  
 “ ly contains half as many inhabitants; and  
 “ you all know, gentlemen, that propaga-  
 “ tion

" tion has been the chief end of our crea-  
 " tion. But alas, gentlemen! let us saddle  
 " an additional weight of labour on our  
 " poor, and deprive them at the same time  
 " of their rejoicing festivals and rareeshows,  
 " what will be the consequence? The con-  
 " sequence will be, that they will work  
 " their own destruction. It is true, that  
 " our stock in trade will certainly grow a  
 " little larger, for a while, after the aboli-  
 " tion, and bring perhaps some few cart-  
 " loads of money into our country from  
 " foreign parts. But then the cheapness of  
 " money will cause dearness of provisions,  
 " and increase much the price of all the ne-  
 " cessaries of life: and then our poor will be  
 " poor indeed, as it is certain they have as  
 " good backs as any poor in Christendom to  
 " undergo labour; but have, on the other  
 " hand, no more wit than the other poor in  
 " Christendom to make their profit of their  
 " labour, and get their share of the afore-  
 " said cart-loads of money. Skilful com-  
 " puters, who are seldom of their class,  
 " will get all that money to themselves;  
 " and a few will have plums and large e-  
 " states, while thousands shall be obliged  
 " to labour, pine, and starve. Then dear-  
 " ness of provisions and other necessities  
 " will often make them angry, and upon  
 " the least ground of complaint they will  
 " assemble riotously, and burn and destroy  
 " granaries and mills, and throw corn and  
 " cheese

"cheese into ponds and rivers to make  
 "them cheap; and seditiously surround the  
 "dwellings of our nobility and chief people,  
 "whom they shall dream to be the authors  
 "of their wants; and create great confusion  
 "in all parts of the country; and thus  
 "we shall bring upon us such evils and calamities  
 "as we are still total strangers to.  
 "Let us therefore suffer the good creatures  
 "to live on as they have done these many  
 "ages; let them gaze with wonted superstition  
 "on their wooden saints and paste-board  
 "Madona's; let them enjoy their festivals  
 "and rareeshows; and a fig for these  
 "outlandish politics imported in French  
 "books, that turn the heads of all our  
 "reading youth, and never will do Italy  
 "any good!"

Now, Mr. Samuel Sharp the politician,  
 what reply would you have made to this  
 speech of our Machiavelian? Did you not  
 say, that the gondoliers of Venice are better  
 fed and better dressed than your boatmen on  
 the Thames? that the low people at Naples  
 look as athletically as Milo in times of yore?  
 that the beggars of Tuscany are better clad  
 and more cleanly lodged than your beggars  
 through Middlesex and Surry? You certainly  
 said or hinted something in your book to  
 this purpose; and heaven knows what you  
 would have said if you had ever entered the  
 chearful and hospitable habitations of the Lombard,  
 the Piedmontese, and the Genoese peasantry!



fantry! Will you now still say, Sir, that their festivals and raree-shows are totally impolitic as well as superstitious, and that the princes of Italy were not so wise as your worship; because they did not accept of the abolition as you would have done?

These festivals and raree-shows, Mr. Sharp, are superstitious, I grant it over and over; and the vulgar of Italy are very credulous when they believe, that their salvation partly depends on their devotion to those festivals and raree-shows. But while you upbraid your neighbours for their superstition and credulity, do not forget your friends at home, and observe, that absurdities are not all on the other side of the water. Remember, Sir, that in your days and mine some of your countrymen were tried and one of them fairly hanged, for having drowned a poor old woman, because she was a witch. This single fact ought to persuade you, that the low part of mankind are naturally superstitious and credulous every where. And we men of bright understandings may easily rail at credulity and superstition; but to root them out of the world is beyond the power of our wit; and I know some people, who would not think it very advantageous neither, if it was even possible. Changes are not made without inconvenience, even from worse to better, as one of your best divines has observed: and the abolishing of festivals and raree-shows in Italy would in all likelihood prove

prove just as easy as to hinder the English freeholders from selling their votes at elections. Mr. Sharp may scoff as long as he pleases at the superstition and credulity of the Italians: he is very welcome; but he must not forget, that credulity and superstition are no vices: that it is no crime to run and see a man in a bottle in the Haymarket, or a ghost in Cock-lane: to buy dying-speeches of people who died without uttering a word: to be dupes of News-paper-quacks, and Grub-street politicians: to be averse to sit thirteen at table: to crowd Whitfield and Wesley's tabernacles, and be methodists, quakers, or anabaptists; to eat cross buns at Easter, and slaughter turkies at Christmas: to wonder at the French, that can live upon frogs and soup, and be sure of the existence of giants in Patagonia.

## C H A P. X.

**I** Think it already proved to the reader's satisfaction, that Mr. Sharp understands not a word of Italian. Were any farther evidence necessary, I would instance his childish remarks on our theatres, on which he has bestowed five full letters, and his profound silence about the present state of our literature.

Of our theatrical abilities, as poets, he says nothing. He only describes the extent of our stages; the width of the boxes; their  
price

price and disposition ; the gaudiness of the scenery, its illumination, or no illumination ; the salary of the singers ; the length of the dances ; the inattention of the audience, and other such miserable trifles, which prove not only tedious, but erroneous for the greatest part. He says, for instance, in one line, that the *opera-performers are not paid so liberally at Naples as at London* ; and in the next line, that Gabrieli *had, for one year only, nine hundred English pounds*. Would then Gabrieli be more liberally paid if she was engaged for the Haymarket ? There she would scarcely be paid more than a thousand pounds, and be at the expence of coming and going, besides the greater expence that she would be put to for living, which is, at least, thrice dearer in London than in Naples. Mr. Sharp seems firmly persuaded, that the Italian musicians get vast heaps of guineas here, and buy large estates with English money when they go back to their homes : but let him, if he can, name more than one Italian singer who ever grew rich in England since Senesino. I have seen for ten years the operas in the Haymarket carried on to the great satisfaction of the English musical ladies ; but I have likewise seen almost all the chief Italian performers there return home very poor, or with very small savings in their pockets, in spite of their *enormous salaries, and prodigious benefits*. Visconti, Serafino, Mattei, and one or two more, carried

ried away, it may be, four or five hundred pounds each, one with another: but Mingotti, Potenza, Cornacchini, Ricciarelli, and many more went away moneyless; as they chose to submit to an unjust abatement in their salaries, rather than trust twice to those jurymen, who made strange mouths on hearing that people were paid *a thousand pounds for a song*. Then the singers of less note are so poorly paid, considering the dearth of every thing in London, that they struggle under great difficulties all the time they stay here; get themselves into gaol pretty often for debt; and at last return home as poor as they came.

As to the fiddlers and other Italians, who come here to play or to teach music, foolishly attracted by the great renown of English riches, they perform at the Opera and at Madam Cornely's, and trot about from house to house every morning, to give lessons for two guineas a dozen, while the winter lasts: but scarcely one in twenty has found himself twenty pounds the better at the year's end for these twenty years past.

I will not expatiate farther on this low subject, of which, low as it is, Mr. Sharp knows but very little, notwithstanding his pretty comparison between Chabran and Giardini, and his encomiums on the two *Bisouci's*, as he calls them; or *Besozzi*, as he ought to have called them.

Instead

Instead of being so diffuse as he is on these trifles, Mr. Sharp would have done much better to have given us some critical synopsis or analysis of some of the comedies, tragedies, farces, or operas, which he pretends to have seen in several of our towns, to enable us to compare them with the works of the same kind written in the English language. But instead of doing any thing of this sort, he touches, and does but touch, upon our Harlequins and Don Fastido's, and takes not the least notice of our *extempore-comedies*: a singularity striking enough for any stranger to note amongst the most peculiar characteristics of the Italian theatre. What delight can an English reader find in hearing Mr. Sharp talk of the white or black drawers worn by the Italian dancers on the stage; of lemonades drank in the boxes by Italian ladies; or of the alternate loss and gain made by Italian managers? What do we care whether industry or *mere accident* threw these particulars in his way?

Had Mr. Sharp been able to construe ever so little of our language, he would, in all likelihood, have touched upon the merits of our poets and men of learning; and would have said something, good or bad, right or wrong, of the great number of books continually published in many of our towns. Was this a topic to be overlooked by such a skilful censurer? By a man who has resided about a year amongst us, without having  
any



any thing to do? By a man, who has been an author himself before he went his journey, and did intend still to keep that character on his return? This was a topic not to be past unnoticed by Mr. Sharp, who betrays a strong desire to be ranked amongst the modish writers of the age in the very first pages of his work, giving a minute detail of his memorable visit (just as he was going to enter Italy) to the famous monsieur de Voltaire, and pluming himself on his early acquaintance with that extraordinary genius.

On seeing Mr. Sharp enter upon the description of his Italian ramble, with a lively stricture on that Frenchman's opinions and works, I certainly expected he would not have missed the opportunity of gratifying the curiosity of his learned countrymen, by telling them something worthy notice of the learning of Italy: but I was soon aware I should be disappointed. Yet perhaps he has done better, to omit this fruitful subject, as the little he tells us of Voltaire is so jejune, so trifling, so uninteresting, and so erroneous, that it makes us the less regret so great an omission.

*I wish for the honour of my country, says Mr. Sharp most patriotically, that a Frenchman could taste the language of Shakespeare. Ay! so would every Englishman that the Mogul himself could; and so would all men in all countries be pleased, if foreigners could taste*  
the

the language of their best poets. As far as such a wish can go, every sensible native of any country is a very laudable patriot. Every Frenchman would be glad to see even the inhabitants of the moon taste those dramatic performances which fill his heart with pity, or convulse his face with laughter; and every Italian would be supremely rejoiced to see the whole universe delighted by Pulci, animated by Ariosto, and melted by Metastasio. But these are idle wishes, that never will be gratified. Too large a part of a man's life must necessarily be spent in acquiring that infinite association of ideas, which is indispensibly required to taste, as a native, the language of any foreign poet. Few men enjoy leisure enough for so difficult an acquisition: and it is owing to the want of this leisure, as well as to their arrogance and self-conceit, that so many critics of all nations blunder at every word, whenever they sit in judgment on this and that foreign poet. I am presumptuous enough to think myself a tolerable master of the English; but I am likewise humble enough to abstain from pronouncing, that many passages in Milton and Shakespeare are not striking, because they do not strike me when I read them: and this my reserve and timidity arises from an observation I have had many times occasion to make, that many of those passages which did not strike me when I read them myself, have struck me very forcibly.

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forcibly when I heard them read by those who knew how they are to be read.

Mr. Sharp is then quite out of the way when he says, that Voltaire has presented his countrymen with some specimens of Shakespeare's works, *with a view to make them admire the manner of writing of that poet.* Had Mr. Sharp read or understood Voltaire's works, he would certainly have given another account of Voltaire's *real views*, when he gave those specimens. Voltaire, on one side, never knew English enough to construe a page of simple prose; and is actuated, on the other hand, by a vanity bordering upon phrenzy, to appear possessed of all the modern polite languages: to shew his skill in English, he has given the world some random criticisms on a few British poets, Dryden and Shakespeare especially. Of Dryden's poetical works he approves *a tenth part only*, without specifying the *one* that he approves, and the *nine* he disapproves. An ingenuous and satisfactory judgment! On Shakespeare he has bestowed, here and there, a few meagre praises when he was in England. But as soon as he was gone, he changed his tone, and made repeated endeavours to render him ridiculous. Let us but read his translation of Hamlet\*, and we shall be convinced, that this was *his only view*, and that the English, in his opinion, are intirely without

\* See Les ouvrages posthumes de Guillaume Vadé.

without taste and judgment in their extravagant admiration of this favourite poet.

It may be true, that Voltaire, in his conversation with Mr. Sharp, called the French translation of the Spectator *dull writing*. I will not bring in question Mr. Sharp's recollection of Voltaire's words, and much less Mr. Sharp's veracity in this particular. But as I could speak French from my infancy, I will venture to tell him, that the French translation of the Spectator is very faithful, as to the sense, and very elegant, as to the language. It is true, that the French read it not with that relish, with which the English read the original; and the reason is plain. The Spectator's papers are, in a great measure, local: therefore cannot equally interest foreign readers. The French translator, well aware of this, has even omitted some of those papers which were applicable to the English manners only. Were the Spectator translated ever so well into Arabic, it would please the Arabs still less than it does the French. But if Voltaire has really depreciated the French translation of the Spectator to Mr. Sharp, Voltaire has been as unjust to Monsieur Coste, as he has to many other of his countrymen. His warmest admirers cannot deny, that he had wronged old Rousseau the poet, the Abbé des Fontaines, Fréron, the journalists of Trevouze, and many more, of whom he has repeatedly, and with the greatest malice, endeavoured to give  
a much

a much worse character than they deserve. And was any man to model his opinions on Voltaire's assertion with regard to the French writers, the king of Prussia himself would smile at his credulity.

But if Mr. Voltaire has been unjust to many of his countrymen, he is still more so to many who are foreigners in respect to him. See him play the critic on the English, the Italians, the Spaniards, and the Portuguese, there is no end of his mistakes, of his dissimulation, of his foppery, and of his arrogance. Whether he commends or disapproves, his censure is the offspring of envy, and his praise the child of affectation. In the abovementioned translation of Hamlet, he has turned into burlesque what was serious, and metamorphosed solemnity into buffoonry. Yet, both by his translation, and his remarks on the original, he wants to impose himself for a mighty connoisseur in English language and poetry. Nay, he has so far succeeded in his malignant scheme of depreciating Shakespeare, that numberless of his countrymen think the English bard many degrees below the worst dramatic writer ever produced by France. This is actually the prevalent opinion in that kingdom concerning Shakespeare: and this opinion is so far spread, that I myself was censured in print, by a scribbling friar of Bologna, for a favourable account I gave my countrymen of Shakespeare; and the friar's argument rested upon  
this



this single point, that Voltaire had been long in England as well as I, and had given an account of that same poet very different from mine. But was it possible to make Voltaire understand English as well as a native, and infuse into him some sense of shame at the same time, I am of opinion he would curse himself for the greatest literary impostor that ever existed, on his giving a new perusal to his absurd translation of Hamlet. Yet let us be just to this impostor, and say, that his disingenuity in criticism, and his ignorance in foreign languages, do not take all literary merit from him. We should be unjust, not to admire the great beauty of his *Zaïre*, and the noble simplicity of his *Charles XII*.

But since I am fallen on the subject of Voltaire's great ignorance of the English language, let the reader indulge me with a single specimen of his still greater ignorance in the Italian. This affair concerns not only Mr. Voltaire, but Mr. Sharp: the one, for endeavouring to mislead all Europe most grossly in its opinion of one of our theatrical writers, and the other, for having, when he spends so much time on theatrical matters, passed over wholly in silence a writer, who raised himself (however unworthily) to a high degree of transitory eminence. Indeed the controversy which was carried on about this writer, when Mr. Sharp was in Italy, must have led Mr. Sharp to form some judgment on him, if he meant to give his countrymen

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the least notion of the Italian stage above the ideas of a property-man in a playhouse.

This writer, so magnified by Mr. Voltaire, and so neglected (with all other, good and bad) by Mr. Sharp, is Goldoni. Goldoni is a very voluminous playmonger, having published no less than thirty volumes of comedies. As his chief scope is always bustle and show, he has stunned the ears and captivated the heart of the vulgar, and of the Venetian gondoliers especially, to whom he has paid so many fine compliments in many of his plays, praising them for their astonishing knowledge, taste, and morality, that they proved his best friends for a long while. But his language is the most nauseous medley of words and phrases, taken from several of the Italian dialects, and tuscanized in a most ridiculous manner, besides being seasoned with abundance of gallicisms. His sentiments are constantly so trite and so vulgar, whether he makes a duchess or a footman speak, that those of one may full as well fit the other. Goldoni knows no art, no science. His blunders in law and in ethics, in physic and anatomy, in geography and natural history (for the fellow talks of every thing) are numerous beyond conception. In one of his plays, he makes a Londoner hint at the canals of London, imagining London to be such a town as Venice; and makes another Englishman talk of a most dreadful and unfrequented forest within twenty miles of London, where

an outlawed Scotch lord hid himself in a mountainous cave for many years. The manners of his country he paints after the life indeed, making the coffee-house men in Venice draw their swords and fight duels in their own shops, or before them, and disarm gentlemen, whose livery they wore for many years before they took to the trade of selling coffee. He makes a gentleman go to besiege in a military form the house of his neighbour in a populous town, with a squadron of his domestic servants. He makes ladies, disguised like pilgrims, go in search of their runaway husbands, or fight bravely with sword and dagger either men or other ladies. As he has been used from his childhood to that slavish meanness and total dependance, in which the Venetian nobility keep their subjects, he has the idea of nobility so strongly impressed upon him, and reveres it with such an abjection, that he constantly gives it the preference to virtue itself. *Il decoro delle famiglie*, says he very gravely in one of his prefaces, *non deve essere sacrificato al merito della virtù.* “The dignity of high descent ought not to be prostituted to the merit of virtue.” Full of these vile notions he draws his low self in all his characters, and renders an English peeress outrageously mad at the thought of her brother’s marriage with a virtuous woman of low rank. Then he sends an English lord to the house of another, with positive orders from the king to try

try him in a summary way, his majesty having heard that his lordship is jealous of his new bride, and desirous that she suffer no injury in his kingdom, if her guilt is not proved: but if it should appear on the other hand, that she has violated her fidelity to her husband, he is resolved to punish her.

Then the notions of right and wrong are so entangled together in Goldoni's head, that he mistakes very frequently one for the other, virtue for vice, or vice for virtue; proposing to our imitation the most abominable characters, and mistaking them himself for excellent patterns of good parents, good husbands, good wives, good children, and good friends.

What can I say more of this Goldoni, but that he is the author of the two *Buona Figliuola's*? Yes; he is the author of these two stupendous burletta's, which the English have lately so much admired in the Hay-market: not on account of the words to be sure; for the words they do not understand; and if they did, the mere supposition of their approbation would be too great an affront to their understandings; but on account of Piccini's music, which might render Hurlo-Thrumbo a master-piece of harmony; and on account of Lovattini's power of hiding dulness and animating stupidity with his voice, his action, and his humour.

This heterogeneous Italian wit, who, as I said, has rendered himself the idol of the

Venetian canaille; this chief object of contempt with all those Italians that are not canaille; this same Goldoni is one of the greatest men of the age with Monsieur De Voltaire. Goldoni, if you will take Voltaire's word\*, is the son and the painter of nature. Nothing can cope with Goldoni's genius. The goddess of comedy has whispered wit in his ear, after having impregnated his fancy with humour. Goldoni, the immortal Goldoni, has rescued Italy from harlequins and Gothic

\* Here is a letter, in very bad Italian, by Voltaire to Goldoni.

*Signor mio, pittore e figlio della natura, vi amo dal tempo ch'io vi leggo. Ho veduta la vostr' anima nelle vostre opere. Ho detto: ecco un uomo onesto e buono, che ha purificata la scena Italiana, che inventa colla fantasia, e scrive col senno. Oh che fecondità! mio signore, che purità! Avete riscattato la vostra patria dalle mani degli Arlecchini. Vorrei intitolare le vostre commedie: l'Italia liberata da' Goti. La vostra amicizia m'onora, m'incanta. Ne sono obbligato al Signor Senatore Albergati, e voi dovete tutti i miei sentimenti a voi solo. Vi auguro, mio signore, la vita la più lunga, la più felice, giacché non potete essere immortale come il vostro nome. Intendete di farmi un grand' onore, e già m'avete fatto ill più gran piacere.*

This letter, with some other things written by Voltaire in praise of Goldoni, are printed in one of Goldoni's volumes, and I have been shown the original of this very letter by the nobleman named in it, who is heartily ashamed of having, when too young, praised Goldoni to Voltaire.



Gothic barbarity, and brought back once more the happy days of Plautus and Terence, together with those still happier ones of Leo the Tenth, and Clement the Seventh, Goldoni's works shall last as long as taste; and the great-grand-daughter of the great Corneille, who lives with him, shall by his direction study Goldoni's works, that she may not only learn from them pure Italian, but also politeness, decency, and virtue.

Such is the panegyric made by Monsieur de Voltaire on our Goldoni, both in prose and verse, in good French and in wretched Italian: and exactly at the same time when Mr. Sharp was in Venice, a vehement paper-war was carried on by the Italians on account of Goldoni, and on the praises lavished on him by that famous Frenchman. Had Mr. Sharp, when in that town, only stepped into a bookseller's shop or a coffee-house, and made the least enquiry about theatrical matters, it had been impossible for him not to hear of that paper-war. Some blockheads (and blockheads are very plentiful in all countries) joined in opinion with the senseless rabble of the Venetian gondoliers, and stood out with undaunted dulness for Goldoni and Voltaire; and some who in my opinion deserve a better title, ridiculed the one and contemned the other.

In such a country of slavery as Italy is, according to Mr. Sharp's sly remark, and where in his opinion *politics, religion, and liberty*

*berty cannot be animadverted upon with safety,* it is easy to imagine, that this interesting dispute about Goldoni and his French panegyrist, was a pretty universal subject of conversation. Yet Mr. Sharp does not so much as mention it, though he be an old friend of Voltaire, and though he had so fair an opportunity of doing it in one of his *five letters* so long and so tedious on the Italian stage. Such was Mr. Sharp's industry and care in collecting materials for his book: and yet *upon his arrival in so large and celebrated a city as Naples, he made the public spectacles his first pursuit*: nay, he even gave a description of *Teatro Novo* and *Teatro de' Fiorentini*, and still more, *measured with his eye the amazing extent of the opera-stage, with the prodigious circumference of his boxes.*

To these, and other equally important remarks, Mr. Sharp has limited his criticisms on our theatrical compositions, and abilities in exhibiting them. But as informations of this kind, and discussions on public spectacles, are generally entertaining, and reckoned sometimes instructive, I intend in the next chapter to supply Mr. Sharp's omissions, and endeavour to give the English reader some idea of the Italian stage, and inform him in as succinct a manner as possible of its rise, progress, and present state.

## C H A P. XI.

THERE is no need of displaying much erudition to prove, that the Italians knew much sooner than any modern people in Europe the true dramatic art, as no body conversant in literature is ignorant of this truth.

It is commonly believed, that the two first regular drama's which made their appearance in the western world soon after the revival of learning, were the comedy of *Calandra* by cardinal Bibiena, and the tragedy of *Sophonisba*, by Giangiorgio Trissino: the *Calandra* exhibited at Florence for the first time, and the *Sophonisba* at Vicenza.

The pleasure given by those two compositions, and by many other written at the same time, must have been very great and very universal, since in the large library bequeathed a few years ago by Apostolo Zeno to the Dominican friars in Venice, there is a collection of about four thousand such performances, all written within the space of a century, which go now amongst us by the appellation of *commedie antiche*, *antient comedies*, whether they are comedies, tragedies, or tragi-comedies.

I have read in my younger days a large number of those *commedie antiche*, which are all still much admired by many of our scholars, on account of their having been most

scrupolously modelled upon the tragedies of Sophocles and Euripides, and the comedies of Plautus and Terence. But I do not wonder at the neglect in which they fell towards the beginning of the last century, which neglect still continues. The tameness of their diction, the want of interesting incidents, the insipid simplicity of their plots, and, above all, the Greek and Roman manners that prevail in the best of them, at length cloyed and disgusted the greater part.

Our theatrical composers were therefore obliged to furnish their audiences with entertainments of more vivacity and greater intrigue. Accordingly another species of drama was cultivated throughout Italy, more conformable to the cheerful temper of the nation, and more analogous to our customs; and the personages of this new kind of dramatic entertainments played in masks.

Ricoboni, a famous Italian comedian at Paris, in a work which he has dedicated to an English queen, has very satisfactorily proved, that the masked actors of the *commedie dell' arte* (a cant name for those burlesque plays substituted to the *commedie antiche*) are not wholly of modern invention, but lineally descended from the Attellana's of the Romans, which kept their power of pleasing the Italians from generation to generation through all the barbarous ages, standing their ground in many obscure parts  
of

of Italy against the regular tragedies and comedies produced by the numerous successors of Trissino and Bibiena.

Each of these masked personages in the *commedie dell' arte* was originally intended as a kind of characteristical representative of some particular Italian district or town. Thus *Pantalone* was a Venetian merchant, *Dottore* a Bolognese physician, *Spaviento* a Neapolitan bragadocio, *Pullicinella* a wag of Apulia, *Giangurgolo* and *Coviello* two clowns of Calabria, *Gelsomino* a Roman beau, *Beltrame* a Milanese simpleton, *Brighella* a Ferrarese pimp, and *Arlecchino* a blundering servant of Bergamo.

Each of these personages was clad in a peculiar dress; each had his peculiar mask; and each spoke the dialect of the place he represented.

Besides these and a few other such personages, of which at least four were introduced in each play, there were the *Amoroso's* or *Innamorato's*; that is, some men and women who acted serious parts, with *Smeraldina*, *Colombina*, *Spilletta*, and other females who played the parts of *servetta's*, or *waiting-maids*. All these spoke Tuscan or Roman, and wore no masks.

Not many of the compositions, in which these masked personages with the *innamorado's* and *servetta's* were introduced, are to be found printed, because they were seldom written. Their authors only wrote in a ve-



ry compendious way the business of each scene in a progressive order : and sticking two copies of the *scenario* (so this kind of dramatic skeleton is called) in two lateral back parts of the stage before the entertainment began, each actor caught the subject of each scene with a glance whenever called forth by his cue, and either singly or colloquially spoke extempore to the subject. Of these scenario's, or skeletons, a good many are still extant. One Flaminio Scala, a comedian, has published fifty of his own invention in 1611. I once saw the book, but could not make much of any of his plots, which are not easily unravelled but by comedians long accustomed to catch their reciprocal hints.

This way of composing comedies will certainly be thought extremely odd by an Englishman accustomed to a greater regularity of composition, and he will imagine that they can be little better than imperfect and farcical performances. And so in a certain degree they are, and thought so to be by the greatest part of our learned men, who have long wished to see them banished the Italian stage. Yet in spite of their critical austerity I must own, that some of the actors, particularly *Sacchi* and *Fiorili*, (commonly called *Truffaldino* \* and *Tartaglia* from the characters in

\* *Truffaldino* or *Tracagnino* mean the same as *Arlecchino*, Harlequin. *Tartaglia* means a *stutterer*, a *stammerer*.

which

which they excel) whom I have lately seen in Venice, made me unwilling to join in opinion with our critics; and I cannot very cordially wish for a total alteration in our wonted manner of composing and exhibiting comedies, as the efforts which our actors are obliged to make when put to this hard stretch, are such, that they give me often much greater occasion for wonder than for criticism. These plays are besides a very singular peculiarity of our nation; and out of respect to such a peculiarity, as well as to the antiquity of its origin, I think they ought to be kept up as long as possible, and that criticism should rather be exerted in their emendation than their destruction.

A foreigner cannot easily conceive with what readiness our actors perform their extempore parts, and how difficult it is, both for natives and foreigners, to find out that they speak extempore. Mr. Garrick told me in Venice, that the comedian who pleased him most in Paris, was the *Pantalone* of what they call there *la Comedie Italienne*: and the famous *Carlin*, who personates Harlequin on the same stage, though he has brought himself to speak almost always in French, speaks with such volubility and propriety, that his audience never can distinguish between his extempore and his written parts. Had Mr. Garrick heard *Sacchi* and *Fiorili* in Italy, I will venture to say, that he would have received from them full as much satisfaction.

satisfaction as he did from the Harlequin and the Pantaloon at Paris.

But the delight given by these extempore performances depends chiefly on the abilities of the actors; and able actors in this way cannot be many, especially in a country where there are no such immense towns as London and Paris, that can afford a maintenance to numbers of them at once, out of which many will be brought by emulation to approach more or less to excellence. The Italians therefore, in order to help the middling actors, have introduced music upon the stage about the beginning of the last century, which brought about the formation of those musical drama's now called *opera's* when they are serious, and *opera buffa's* or *burletta's*, when they are burlesque.

Of the first writers of opera's, whether serious or burlesque, scarcely any have escaped oblivion, and none of them really merited to have their names preserved. Zeno and Metastasio are the only two, who are entitled to this honour.

Apostolo Zeno found the opera quite rude and imperfect, and he brought it within the jurisdiction of the Aristotelian precepts. As he was a great master of Greek, he endeavoured to give it a Greek cast, and crowded it with duo's, trio's, and chorusses, imitating as much as he could the strophe, antistrophe, and epode of the antient Greek tragedies.

But

But though Zeno's invention be great, his characters various, his sentiments just, and his plots well contrived, yet his diction has so little liveliness and elegance, and his versification is so uncouth, that his opera's are still read by many, but set to music by few or none: and I have often fancied, that if his dramatic performances were well translated into another language, they might be read with greater pleasure than any of Metastasio's, as the sentiments are more thick-fown, his invention greater, and his characters better marked than Metastasio's.

Metastasio's operas upon the whole are far from having all Zeno's dramatical perfecti-  
ons; but they are likewise far from having his chief defects. The elegance, liveliness, and rapidity of Metastasio's diction are not to be paralleled, and his numbers are enchanting. His airs, duo's, and chorusses run into music with surprising facility, and our composers have but little trouble in cloathing them with harmony; so that it is chiefly to him, that they owe that honour of musical pre-eminence which they have incontestably enjoyed throughout Europe for these many years.

As for our *opera buffa's* or *burletta's*, though we have a multitude of them, yet not one is worth reading. Absurdity, mean-  
ness, and a little ribaldry too, are their chief ornaments. Yet our musical composers know at present their trade so well, that they render

der them pleasing to the numerous vulgar. Every sensible Italian is ashamed of them, and looks with contempt and indignation on those verse-mongers who write them. But their shame, contempt, and indignation are of no service to their country, as not only the low minded Italians are delighted with them, but even the nations that boast of politeness and taste superior to ours, make it a point to encourage such mongrel compositions.

The *commedie dell' arte*, the *opera's*, and the *burletta's*, were not the only theatrical entertainments substituted by the Italians to the *commedie antiche*. They invented likewise two other drama's, one called *commedie pastorali*, *pastoral plays*, the other *commedie rustiche*, *rustic plays*.

Of pastoral plays some hundred are still to be found in the collections of the curious. But as pastoral life never existed but in the innocent imagination of love-sick girls, pastoral plays could never allure the many, and support themselves long. None of them, for aught I know, has been exhibited in Italy within these fifty years, and our young people only still read a few of them; namely, *Aminta* by Tasso, *Pastor Fido* by Guarini, *Filli di Sciro* by Bonarelli, and *Alceo* by Ongaro; to which our harmless nuns join the *Filarmindo*, the author of which I do not at present recollect. But our critics and people of taste look upon these and other such compositions with much less esteem than our forefathers



forefathers did, as they find them abounding with imaginary manners, unnatural sentiments, puerile conceits, and epigrammatical turns. The fashion of pastoral plays is now so utterly exploded throughout Italy, that the revered name of Politian himself cannot rescue his *Orfeo* \* from total disregard; and the learned themselves scarcely know the existence of that performance.

As to *rustic plays* we never had many, and of them only the *Tancia* is generally known to polite readers. This *Tancia* was written by Michelangelo Bonaroti, a nephew of the famous Michelangelo. It is a regular drama in rhyme; and its personages are Florentine peasants. The neatness of its language, and the truth of its manners are delightful. For my part I look upon it as one of the most capital pieces that Italy ever produced; and was only a single play of ours to be saved from oblivion, I would give my vote for the *Tancia*. However it is acted no more, as it would not be easy to find a number of actors fit to represent it; and it is only brought sometimes on the private stages of our colleges by way of entertainment to young students in the autumnal vacancies, or the carnival time.

\* This was the first pastoral play written in Italian. The first edition of it has no date: the second was printed *In Venezia per Nicolò Zoppino*, 1524.

To this short account of the Italian stage I have only to add, that within these forty or fifty years the *commedie dell' arte*, together with the *opera's* both serious and burlesque have greatly prevailed over all other theatrical entertainments.

However in these late years some new and considerable additions have been made to our stock; and a short account of those additions I hope will not prove disagreeable in the next chapter.

## C H A P. XII.

**W**HEN the names of the French tragic writers, and especially those of Corneille and Racine, began to be commonly known in Italy, some of our wits thought of giving us tragedies modelled after the French manner. Many such were therefore written in a little time, amongst which the *Merope* by the marquis Maffei, the *Ulisse* by Lazzarini, the *Elettra* by count Gasparo Gozzi and a few more met with much approbation on several stages of Italy; and it is probable they will not soon be forgotten, as they are not written with that humility of language and weakness of versification which predominate in all our ancient tragedies.

We have likewise seen represented of late by our actors almost all the tragedies of Corneille, Racine, Crebillon, and Voltaire, translated into blank verse. But our polite people

ple cannot fill a play-house by themselves, and our vulgar cannot as yet be brought to relish such compositions. They are still strangers to the pleasure of weeping, and would still have kept invariably faithful to their Harlequins, Pantaloons, Brighella's, and the other masks, if Goldoni and Chiari had not suddenly made their appearance about eighteen or twenty years ago.

Of Goldoni I have already said enough to give a sufficient idea of the man as a composer of plays. And of the abbot Pietro Chiari I have nothing else to say, but that he is, if possible, still worse than Goldoni in every particular.

These two strange mortals were both in the same year accidentally engaged to compose comedies for two different stages at Venice. It is not to be conceived how prodigiously popular they both became after having exhibited two or three of their fantastical and absurd compositions, and how quickly they brought show, and noise, and nonsense into vogue: the like has never been seen in any country. However it must be observed, that part of their rapid popularity they owed to their satirizing one another upon the stage in a most unmerciful manner; and the Italians are not less pleased with bull-baiting than the English. It was by this means chiefly, that our two combatants divided our people into parties, some countenancing one, and some supporting

ing the other; nor need my English readers be told what the consequence of parties is, let their object be ever so unimportant.

None of Goldoni's and Chiari's productions can really stand the test of criticism. They both were born without wit, and educated without learning. Yet an epidemical phrenzy in their favour seized the Venetians, both high and low, and quickly spread itself from Venice to almost all parts of Italy. That phrenzy was then much encreased by the preposterous praises lavished by Monsieur de Voltaire on Goldoni, as they contributed much to his getting some superiority over his antagonist.

These fruitful geniusses in the space of about ten years supplied our many stages with several hundred of plays; and Goldoni in particular boasted in one of them, intituled *Il Teatro Comico*, that he had composed *sixteen comedies in a year*, of which he produced the titles from the mouth of an actor.

Such a rapidity of entertainments rendered the two psuedo-poets absolute sovereigns of the stage; and no body knows how long their empire would have lasted, if some learned men, tired with their double deluge of nonsense, had not begun to harrafs them both with criticism.

One Carlo Gozzi, younger brother to count Cosparo Gozzi already mentioned, was the first that fell hard upon Goldoni and Chiari; and many others soon followed. The  
two

two bards, finding themselves attacked very closely, thought prudent to suspend their mutual animosity, clapped up a hasty peace, and joined to oppose their censurers. Chiari was a great prose-scribbler as well as a comedy-monger; so that a brisk paper-war was quickly commenced, which grew hotter and hotter by rapid degrees.

It happened one day, that Carlo Gozzi met with Goldoni in a bookseller's shop. They exchanged sharp words; and in the heat of the altercation Goldoni told his merciless critic, that it was an easy task to find fault with a play; but desired him to observe, that to write a play was a very difficult one. Gozzi replied, that to find fault with a play was really easy: but that it was still easier to write such plays as would please so thoughtless a nation as the Venetians; adding with a tone of contempt, that he had a good mind to make all Venice run to see *The Tale of the Three Oranges* formed into a comedy. Goldoni, with some of his partizans then in the shop, challenged Gozzi to do it if he could; and the critic thus piqued, engaged to produce such a comedy within a few days.

Who could ever have thought that to this trifling and casual dispute Italy should owe the greatest dramatic writer that it ever had! Gozzi quickly wrote a comedy in five acts, intitled *I tre Aranci, The three Oranges*, formed out of an old woman's tale, with which  
the



the Venetian children are much entertained by their nurfes. The comedy was acted, and the three beautiful princeffes born of the three enchanted oranges made all Venice crowd to the theatre of St. Angelo.

It may eafily be imagined, that Goldoni and Chiari were not fpared in the *Tre Aranci*. Gozzi found means to introduce in it a good many of their theatrical abfurdities, and expofed them to public derifion. The Venetians, like all other Italians, do not greatly care for the labour of fearching after truth, and their imagination runs too often away with them, while their judgment lies dormant. But point out fenfe to them, and they will infantly feize it. This was remarkably the cafe on the firft night that the comedy of the Three Oranges was acted. The fickle Venetians forgot infantly the loud acclamations with which they had received the greateft part of Goldoni and Chiari's plays, laughed obftreperoufly at them both, and applauded the Three Oranges in a moft frantic manner.

This good fuccels encouraged Gozzi to write more; and his new plays changed in a little time fo intirely the tafte of the Venetian audiences, that in about two feafons Goldoni was utterly ftripped of his theatrical honours, and poor Chiari totally annihilated. Goldoni quitted Italy and went to France, confiding much in Mr. Voltaire's intereft and recommendations, which, as I have heard,

procured

procured him the place of Italian master to one of the princesses at Versailles, and Chiari retired to a country-house in the neighbourhood of Brescia.

In the years 1764 and 1765 I have seen acted in Venice ten or twelve of Gozzi's plays, and had even the perusal of two or three of them in manuscript; and no works of this kind ever pleased me so much: so that, when I saw Mr. Garrick there, I lamented that he did not come in carnival-time, that he might have seen some of them acted; and I am confident he would have admired the originality of Gozzi's genius, the most wonderful, in my opinion, next Shakespeare, that ever any age or country produced. The cast of Gozzi's mind leads him to strike out many characters and beings not to be found in nature, like that of Caliban in the Tempest; and yet most natural and true like Caliban's.

To his astonishing power of invention, so rare amongst modern poets, Gozzi joins great purity and force of language, harmony of versification, intricacy of plot, multiplicity of incidents, probability of catastrophe, variety of decoration, and many other excellencies expected in the modern drama. It is a pity that this author could never be prevailed upon to publish his plays. He has resisted the strongest solicitations of his friends, without giving any satisfactory reason for his aversion to such a publication. Some attribute it to  
his

his partiality for an actress, to whom he leaves the profits arising from their exhibition: but this I can scarcely believe, as her profits from such a publication would be much more considerable than those which she reaps by her acting. I rather think that having no great value for his audience, Gozzi sets likewise but little value on the things that please them: and perhaps it was a similar reason, that kept Shakespeare from publishing a correct and complete edition of his plays while he lived. May the good genius of the Italian stage befriend Gozzi's compositions, and not suffer it to be robbed of them. I hope they will meet with a better fate than Shakespeare's, and that future commentators will not be put to the trouble of restoring his passages, rectifying his sentences, explaining his obscurities, and adjusting his orthography.

Such was the origin and progress, and such is the present state of the Italian stage. I will not say that Mr. Sharp ought to have given such a circumstantial account of our theatrical abilities and performances. A stranger, as I said before, has need to live the best part of his life in a foreign country to qualify himself for such narrations; and any man may stand easily excused when he passes lightly over such subjects in his travelling accounts. But no stranger can avoid the imputation of self-conceit when, on his return home after a short ramble over any country,

he

he launches out into such ample and multifarious subjects, and pretends to give his countrymen true ideas of things, of which he knows nothing, and could know nothing. Let any man unacquainted with Italy read Mr. Sharp's *Five Letters* on the Italian stage, and he will presently conclude that the Italians are a people most miserably ignorant of theatrical matters; that they have banished all sense and propriety from their drama's; and that they cannot be pleased with any thing but farcical buffoonry. But is this giving a true idea of the Italians and of their stage? Certainly not. The mighty censurer ought to have got better information before he wrote on such a subject; and since he pretends to such skill in Italian, as to know even the Venetian dialect, he ought to have mentioned Carlo Gozzi and Metastasio, as they are dramatic writers not to be equalled by any of modern England and France. What shall we then call Mr. Sharp's *Five Letters*?

## C H A P. XIII.

**I**F Mr. Sharp is guilty of the most ridiculous self-conceit when he speaks at large of the present state of the Italian stage, he likewise incurs the suspicion of dissingenuity when we take notice, that he has past over in the most profound silence the present state of Italian literature.

How

How could this man, who lays the strongest claims to literary honours, neglect a topic which above all others must prove interesting to the most sensible part of the English readers? How could he be so severe when he expatiated on our ignorance and follies, and then be so forgetful of censorial justice as not to speak a single word of our knowledge and our wisdom? To what end did he give an account of his travels through Italy, if he did not visit our several universities, and enter our numerous libraries? If he was not even solicitous for the least information or personal acquaintance with any one of the many men of learning that live at present amongst us? Let us suppose for a moment, that all memoirs of the present Italians were to be destroyed, and only the account given of them by Mr. Sharp was kept in being, what a judgment would posterity form of them! Poor folks, how they would be wronged!

I will not here enquire whether in the celebrated age of Leo X. there was more real knowledge in Italy than there is at present. Such a discussion would lead me too far; and I am withal afraid, that it would prove too hard for my abilities. Let us suppose besides, that after a long examen I should at last declare for the present age, have I not reason to think that my contemporaries would never suffer themselves to be convinced by my arguments? Mankind in general



neral are such *laudatores temporis acli*; they are so bigotted to ancient times, that even the most learned men of Leo's age frequently complained of the ignorance of their times, and set the preceding centuries far above their own, both for science and arts.

Avoiding therefore a discussion which might be deemed invidious, or at least prove fruitless, I shall only observe, that learning cannot procure in our days that veneration to its possessors from all classes of people, and especially from princes and great lords, which it procured them soon after its restoration. Learning therefore is now cultivated both in Italy and in other parts of Europe, more out of regard to its use and convenience in common life, than for any great hopes of arriving by its means at considerable advantages or universal reputation. Our stock of books on all sorts of subjects is so ample at this day, that learned and ingenious men cannot now have that facility which our predecessors had, of making themselves known to their contemporaries, and recommending themselves to public notice by handling a new subject. We have not, like our predecessors, any very powerful incentives from honour or from interest to encrease the number of quarto's and folio's; and this is one of the reasons why many persons at present, in Italy as well as in England and in other countries, cultivate the fields of literature in privacy and humble

content; and yet have laid in much greater stores of knowledge than ever Bembo or Sadoleto; but keep them to themselves, or share them only with the best and most intimate of their friends, without ever thinking of carrying them to any public market by means of the press. A cardinal's hat is not now to be grasped at by climbing up the ladders of Greek and Latin; and a learned man in these days may indeed obtain by industry or chance some petty advantage; but a bishopric in Italy as well as in England, is seldom the reward of mere merit and learning. Whatever a studious recluse surrounded by his books may think of the illustrious age of Leo, when I consider the wonderful progress that all sciences have made all over Europe within these three last centuries, I am almost tempted to think, that, exclusive of the knowledge of learned languages, the real knowledge of the present English women alone, were it possible to bring it all together, would prove not much inferior to the real knowledge of that illustrious age, with which shallow satirists and peevish poets of all countries reproach the degeneracy of their own.

Granting however that the modern Italians are not upon the whole so studious and so learned as their *cinquacentisti* \*, their *ancestors*  
of

\* The Italians give this collective name to the learned who flourished in the sixteenth century, as they call *Trecentisti*, *Quattrocentisti*, and *Secentisti* those who flourished

of *Leo's age*; yet it is wrong in foreigners to suppose, that they are quite destitute of literary merit.

Let any Englishman enter the public libraries of Italy, and he will boast no longer of those of Oxford and of Cambridge, of Gresham and the Museum. I have looked with due reverence on those four, as well as on many more in several parts of this kingdom both public and private: but none of them raised my wonder, as they naturally brought back to my remembrance the Ambrosiana at Milan, that of St. Mark at Venice, the Magliabechiana and the Laurentiana at Florence, and the Vaticana at Rome. These stand in no need of additional shelves to vie with the most famous English libraries. In Turin, Pavia, Parma, Padua, Pisa, Modena, Bologna, and Naples, there are likewise ample collections of books for public use\*: and there is scarce a town, or even a convent throughout Italy without a private or a public library. Many people also have their private ones, and some of them very considerable. I will only mention that of count Pertusati at Milan, which contains above one

G 2

hundred

flourished in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and seventeenth centuries.

\* Misson in his travels reckons fourteen in Venice only, some of which are larger than St. Mark's; and almost all public.

hundred thousand volumes, and for which twenty-five thousand English pounds were once offered by the late emperor,

It would be endless to enumerate all the treasures of learning thus accumulated in numberless parts of Italy; and the Italians are not to be supposed so absurd, as to keep their libraries for mere show, or only for the pleasure of feeding moths and mice. Many men are to be found in them, whose lives were early devoted to the acquisition of knowledge. Ambition and curiosity act upon the inhabitants of Italy with full as much force as they do upon those of other countries, and many of the present Italians were made great scholars either by one or the other of these two powerful movers.

But few are the cultivators of science, whose names are waisted by fame to distant regions, especially during their lives; and the greatest part of them must be contented to enjoy renown only in those places that gave them birth. They cannot all have a king of Prussia for a patron and a panegyrist, who will deign to take the trouble of gilding all Voltaire's silver, and all Algarotti's copper. However, though extended literary reputation be scarce attainable by the sons of learning while they live, and though the approaches towards it be very gradual and slow, yet the names of some living Italians have reached England and other parts of Europe, and those of Metastasio the poet, Morgagni the

the anatomist, Frisio the mathematician, and father Beccaria the electric philosopher, are names no longer confined to their side of the Alps. Vallisnieri, Muratori, Maffei, Cocchi, Poleni, Gori, Giannoni, Buonamici, and Bec-cari, who died but lately, were not names unknown in other countries. Bianchi and Batarra of Rimini, Lami of Florence, Mansi the present archbishop of Lucca, Della Torre and Mazzocchi of Naples, the marquis Fagnano of Sinigaglia, are likewise names with which many professors of science are acquainted throughout all Europe. To these and some others, I might without any great impropriety add those of Boscovich \* the astronomer, and Assermann the oriental linguist, who have had their education and acquired their knowledge amongst us. But though only a few of the learned of Italy have been so happy as to have their names known beyond their mountains and their seas, yet there are many who do honour to their country with their mental acquisitions. In poetry, besides Metastasio and the two Gozzi's, we have Passeroni at Milan, who has printed a kind of satirical epic poem in thirty-three canto's, which abounds in wit, humour, and learning. Under the pretence of relating Cicero's life, this fanciful poet lashes the vices, and points out the foibles that predominate now amongst his countrymen: and making

G 3

due

\* Father Boscovich is a Ragusean, and monsignor Assermann an Assyrian.



due allowance for poetical exaggeration, it is in Passeroni's poem that foreigners ought to look for sure information concerning our customs and manners, and not in the idle and shallow performances of Mr. Sharp and other such conceited and ignorant travellers.

At Milan likewise, there is one Parini, who will certainly prove a very eminent poet, if he continues to write. His *Mattino* and *Mezzodì* have filled me with hopes, that he will soon be the Pope or the Boileau of Italy as he is already almost equal to them in justness of thinking and exactness of expression, and seems to surpass them in richness of imagery and fecundity of invention.

Many other followers of the muses swarm all over Italy, and some of them are in high repute in the places where they reside: but I cannot much praise any of them, as I know none possessed of much invention; and what is a poet without invention?

Some of my readers will be ready to say here, that I do not offer much in commendation of my country when I reckon but five poets in it at this time. But can many centuries boast of many more? and can England, or France, or any other country now muster up a much larger number?

The number of our men well versed in several parts of science, is certainly much larger than that of our poets. In all our universities every kind of literature is much cultivated,

ed, and every one of them can boast of some eminent professor. In some of them the eastern languages especially, may be learned with much greater ease and expedition than in any other university in Europe, as their libraries are more amply furnished with eastern books and manuscripts, and our professors of those languages multiplied by the religious necessity of keeping up a large body of missionaries. In Venice and in Rome one may meet every day with men deeply skilled in oriental literature. Let me only mention here one, who is the most astonishing linguist in my opinion that ever existed. I mean father Bonifacio Finetti, a Dominican friar, who in the year 1756 published ten dissertations on the Hebrew language and its derivatives; that is, the Rabbinical, the Chaldaic, the Syriac, the Samaritan, the Phenician or Punic, the literal Arabic, the vulgar Arabic, and the Amharic. These ten dissertations were given in a volume \* by father Finetti as a specimen of a larger work, which he intended to write upon all languages both ancient and modern.

My learned reader will perhaps start to hear of a man, who intended to write a work

G 4

on

\* This book is intitled *TRATTATO della lingua Ebraica e sue affini, del padre Bonifacio Finetti dell'ordine de' predicatori, offerto agli eruditi per SAGGIO, dell'opera da lui intrappresa sopra i linguaggi di tutto il mondo. In Venezia 1756, appresso Antonio Zatta.*

on all languages, both ancient and modern; and I must say, that when I first cast my eye on the title page of Finetti's specimen, the first thought that occurred was, that its author could be no better than a literary quack or a madman. But the reading of his Ten Dissertations gave me reason to alter my hasty judgment; and I had then no rest until I procured myself the honour of his personal acquaintance.

This friar is now near eighty years old, of which he has employed sixty at least in studying languages. As in the course of his life he scarcely ever stirred from his cell, he is not commonly known, not even in Venice, though it be the place of his birth and constant residence. However he has found means in his long solitude to have from the missionaries sent *in partibus infidelium* by the college of the propaganda at Rome, and from all corners of the world, all sorts of books and manuscripts that could facilitate the study of the remotest tongues.

I have myself brought many English travellers acquainted with him, and they were as much pleased with the conversation of the reverend old man, as surprised at his odd library, which consists chiefly of grammars, dictionaries, bibles, catechisms, prayers, memorials, letters, treaties of peace or commerce, itineraries, and other things of this sort, written in the most obscure languages of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America.

Being

Being about seventy years of age, he formed the design of communicating some part of his immense knowledge to the world, and published his *Ten Dissertations on the Hebrew language and its derivatives* for a specimen, as I said, upon all languages, ancient and modern. This is a translation of part of his preface to that specimen.

" *The FIRST CHAPTER of my work, says he, shall be this very specimen a little enlarged. We shall thus begin our great language-journey from the east, where the Hebrew transports us directly: and running over the eastern countries, we shall only step a while from Arabia into Africa to pay a visit to the Ethiopic and Amharic languages, because these are both daughters of the Hebrew. From Africa we shall then return immediately to Asia, and even enter some parts of Europe, that we may speak of other oriental tongues which have likewise some affinity with the Hebrew. Our SECOND CHAPTER therefore shall give an account of all those other eastern languages that reach from the eastern part of Europe to the river Indus, and owe some part of their origin to the Hebrew tongue; that is, the Greek, the Armenian, the Turkish, and the Persian. Then without turning our back to the rising sun, we will run through the East Indies, and give an account in our THIRD CHAPTER of the East-Indian tongues; that is, the Indostanic, the Malac-*

G 5

" *can,*

“ can, the Malabarical, the Malejamic, the  
 “ Tamulic, the Telugic, the Siamese, and some  
 “ others. Continuing then our journey the same  
 “ way, we shall speak in the FOURTH CHAP-  
 “ TER of the languages of the furthestmost east;  
 “ that is, of the Anamitic, which comprehends  
 “ the Chinese, the Cochinchinese, the Japanese,  
 “ the Formosan, and some others. Then we  
 “ will turn our steps to the north, and entering  
 “ the most eastern Tartary, we will go a journey  
 “ retrograde to our first; that is, we will turn  
 “ to the west, for to come back again to Europe,  
 “ after having visited those vast regions. There-  
 “ fore the FIFTH CHAPTER shal be of the  
 “ Tartar-languages; and as far as our few books  
 “ in them can lead us, we shall say something  
 “ of the Majuric tongue, which is spoke by the  
 “ Chinese Tartars; and of the Mongulise, the  
 “ Tibetan or Tanguttan, the Calmucic, the  
 “ Crimean, and some others. From the Greater  
 “ Tartary continuing our journey to the west we  
 “ enter into Muscovy, and from the Lesser Tar-  
 “ tary into Poland. Both in Muscovy and Po-  
 “ land we meet with the tongue commonly called  
 “ Sclavonian, though it ought to be Slavonian  
 “ or Slavish, which some call likewise Illyric.  
 “ Our SIXTH CHAPTER shall then treat of  
 “ the ancient Sclavonian tongue, and of its deri-  
 “ vatives; that is, the Muscovite, the Polish,  
 “ the Bohemian, the Vandalic, the Illyric or  
 “ Dalmatian, the Corniolan, and others. To  
 “ the west of the countries where the Sclavonian  
 “ tongues are spoken, there is Germany and other  
 “ countries,



“ countries, where we meet many languages  
 “ of Germanic origin. The ancient language  
 “ of Germany is by some called Old Gothic, by  
 “ others Teutonic, and still by others Norrene,  
 “ Norman, or Northern. The SEVENTH  
 “ CHAPTER therefore shall treat of the ancient  
 “ Germanic tongue, and of its several deriva-  
 “ tives, both ancient and modern. The modern,  
 “ beginning from the farther north, are the  
 “ Icelandic, to which we will join the Green-  
 “ landish, as we shall have no properer place  
 “ for it than this; then the Swedish, the Nor-  
 “ wegian, the Danish, the English, the Low-  
 “ Dutch, and the High-Dutch; and this last  
 “ will be the first of which we shall speak.  
 “ Amongst the ancient Germanic tongues there  
 “ are the Runic, the Anglo-Saxon, the Meso-  
 “ gothic, the Teotisk, and some others. From  
 “ Germany, turning our steps to the west, we  
 “ will enter France, and there find one of the  
 “ prettiest daughters of the Latin tongue; then  
 “ the Italian, the Spanish, and the Portuguese,  
 “ with a few others of inferior rank. In the  
 “ EIGHTH CHAPTER therefore we shall  
 “ dwell a while with them, after having paid  
 “ our respectful compliments to their noble  
 “ mother the Latin tongue. And behold! we  
 “ are here come to the utmost verge of Europe.  
 “ However, before we set sail for Africa, we  
 “ must needs speak of several languages inclosed  
 “ in some narrow spaces, which having little  
 “ or no offspring of their own, are by the lin-  
 “ guists

“guists called SMALL TONGUES. Yet these  
 “too deserve our attention; and we shall  
 “therefore form our NINTH CHAPTER of  
 “the small tongues of Europe, in which are  
 “comprised the Hungarian, the Lithuanian,  
 “the Livonian, the Finlandish, the Welch  
 “with the Cornwallian, Irish, Armoric, and  
 “other of its dialects; the Biscayan, which  
 “is thought to be the ancient Spanish; the  
 “Albanese, and some others. Then we will  
 “cross over to Africa. But in that country,  
 “though much larger than Europe, I fear we  
 “shall not be able to travel much, because of  
 “the dreariness of its desarts, and the barba-  
 “rity of its nations: besides that we shall al-  
 “ready have visited the Barbary States upon  
 “occasion of the Arabic language commonly  
 “spoke there. and the empire of Abyssinia,  
 “where the Ethiopic and the Amharic tongues  
 “are predominant. However Egypt will keep  
 “us a while with the Coptic tongue or Old  
 “Egyptian. This tongue shall form the chief  
 “ornament of the TENTH CHAPTER; and  
 “in it we shall speak also of some others, es-  
 “pecially of the ancient African, now called  
 “Tamagzet, and of the Congoyan, Angolian,  
 “Melindan, Ottentotic, Madagascari, and  
 “some others. From Africa then we shall sail  
 “to America, travel it all over, listen to the  
 “various speeches of those wild nations, and  
 “interpret them as far as we shall be assisted  
 “by our books. Of the American languages  
 “we shall make two chapters. The first, which  
 “I “ will

" will be the ELEVENTH in our work, shall  
 " treat of the languages of North-America;  
 " and the second, which will be the TWELFTH  
 " in order, shall comprehend those of South-  
 " America. In the first of these two chapters  
 " we will speak of the Mexican, the Pocoman-  
 " nic, the Virginian, the Algonkine, the Hu-  
 " ronic, the Caribbean, and others; and in  
 " the second, of the Brasilian, the Chilese,  
 " the Peruvian, and others. And with this  
 " chapter we shall put an end to our long and  
 " laborious peregrination."

Such was to be the work designed by my  
 reverend friend father Finetti, a work grand  
 in the design, and as far as it went, com-  
 plete in the execution; a work that would  
 have reflected infinite honour upon his coun-  
 try, as it would have added immensely to  
 that stock of philological knowledge already  
 possessed by the Europeans; and what is still  
 of greater importance, would have apprised  
 the studious part of mankind by striking ex-  
 ample, of the vast and most incredible ac-  
 quisitions the human mind can make, when  
 long and incessantly employed upon the pur-  
 suit of knowledge. But alas! the noble spe-  
 cimen that he gave us of the intended work,  
 which he printed at his own expence, for a  
 long time did not sell! The strangeness of its  
 title, the obscurity of its author, the stupidi-  
 ty of his fellow friars, the barbarous inatten-  
 tion of the Venetians, and some other causes,  
 unfortunately concurred to make this grand  
 per-

performance be neglected: and as father Finetti, like the generality of our friars, had no money to spare for the printing of it, he did not care for the trouble of writing it. Thus the literary world has been for ever robbed of his other eleven volumes, to the everlasting sorrow of every cultivator of knowledge! It is true that eight years after the first edition of the first volume, all the copies of it were sold in a few weeks upon the strong recommendation of a periodical writer, who happened by chance to read it: but the heavy addition of eight years to the old age of the author, had so disabled him, that now he could write no more; and thus Italy and the whole world must for ever bemoan this great loss, as in all probability no man will ever again be found so well qualified for so terrifying an undertaking.

After this account of our Finetti there is no need of introducing any other of my countrymen to the acquaintance of the English. But should any of my readers go to visit Italy, and be desirous to inquire a little into the literature of it, I take the liberty of throwing here in a note \* the names of some few

\* At *Florence*, Perelli, Pompeo Neri, Bandini, Targioni, Manetti, Nannoni, and Nelli.

At *Rome*, Stai, Mammacchi, Maratti, Giacomelli, Zelada, Garampi, and Borgia.

At

few amongst our learned, with whose conversation or works I am sure any Englishman will be pleased, let his knowledge be ever so great and so multifarious.

At *Bologna*, two Zanotti's, Fantoni, two Taruffi's, (one of whom speaks English wonderfully well) Monti, Ferdinand Bassi, and the lady Laura Bassi.

At *Naples*, Genovesi, Gaetti, Martorelli, Coturnio, (the discoverer of two aqueducts in the ear never observed by former anatomists) and marquis Bomba.

At *Modena*, Vandellii.

At *Padua*, Marfili, Carmeli, and Mastrega.

At *Pisa*, Matani and Adami.

At *Cortona*, Coltellini.

At *Lucca*, Benvenuti.

At *Siena*, Baldassarri, Tabarrini, and Pistoï.

At *Volterra*, Guarnaci.

At *Parma*, Pacciaudi.

At *Imola*, count Zampieri.

At *Rimini*, Bonfi, besides Bianchi, and Batarra, already named.

At *Pesaro*, Olivieri.

At *Ancona*, Mauri, Stampini, and Cecco Storani, already named.

At *Macerata*, two Mozzi's, Compagnoni, and Aurispa.

At *Milan*, Imbonati, two Villa's, Balestrieri, Irico, and many more.

At *Genoa*, Giambattista Negroni, Viali, Celestia, Gastaldi, and Pizzorno.

At *Casal*, in Montferrat, Cocconati, Grifella, and Gambera.

At *Turin*, Broardi, Quaregna, Lavriano, Somis, Alione, etc.



## C H A P. XIV.

**A**FTER the above slight account of our literature, it may not be improper to speak of the advantages which the Italians may reasonably expect from addicting themselves to a studious life. An information of this kind will lead my English readers into such parts of our customs, as no traveller of their nation, so far as I have observed, has yet taken notice.

In Italy when a young man is trained up to physick, he has it in his power to get his livelihood by it in a very short time, if he will apply to it in such a manner as to acquire any reputation. On his quitting the university, which is generally done after seven years, and after having taken all his degrees, he goes to serve as a volunteer in some great hospital, or puts himself to a kind of apprenticeship with one of the most noted physicians in a capital town, that he may now learn the practice, as he is supposed to have already learned the theory of physick. The physicians of Italy visit all their patients with their young pupils constantly at their heels, oblige them to inspect minutely all the maladies that fall in their way, and take notice of the remedies they prescribe.

This kind of life a young beginner generally follows, until an opportunity offers to be chosen physician to an hospital, or to go in  
the

the same capacity to some small town or village, which is called *andare in condotta*. As soon as he hears of a vacancy in any provincial place that will suit his circumstances, he applies either personally or by letter to the corporation of it, offers his service, and produces his certificates of having had his degrees, served his apprenticeship, and lived as every honest man ought to live

On occasion of vacancies there are generally several competitors who strive to fill the empty place. But the young physician who has acquired the best character both for skill in his profession, and prudence in common life, has the best chance of succeeding in his application, and of being preferred to the other candidates. His success however depends on the suffrages of the corporation; and the largest number of them is not always obtained by superior merit. Partiality and chance will sometimes interfere, and give a place to one that ought to have been given to another. But we are very sure, on the other hand, that officiousness avails but little in cases of such elections, and that places will never be procured by money, as we are still perfect strangers to the noble arts of bribing voters.

When the place is once obtained, the young physician keeps it until he hears of a better; and then he offers himself a candidate for that. By these means our provincial physicians shift from place to place, that is, from a small *condotta* to a greater.

No

No patient in any provincial place is obliged to fee his physician for his attendance, as each corporation allows him a yearly salary. However almost all families, whether they have occasion for him or not, send him some little present at Easter and at Christmas, which consists of a lamb or a kid, of hams, sausages, capons, game, oil, wine, corn, or the like. The poorest peasant would be ashamed not to send at least a couple of fowls to his physician on the holidays.

This necessity of pushing themselves forward by mere dint of personal merit, and the liberty that people have of employing any physician in the neighbourhood, if they have no good opinion of their own, naturally creates much emulation amongst neighbouring physicians, and makes the greatest part of them apply very seriously to their business; so that it is not rare to find some of them very skilful in their profession even in the obscurest towns of Italy; and I was much surprised two years ago in a petty village of the Upper Montferrat, called Rivalta, to find one signor Bovio, a young physician, not only very skilful in the science of healing, but also possessed of a large collection of the natural productions of that province made by himself, and especially of petrifications scarce to be found even in the amplest museums. It is to that emulation we chiefly owe the works of our Borelli's, Bellini's, Malpighi's, Baglivi's,

livi's, Torricelli's, Redi's, and many others, whose names are known to the physicians of this part of the world, as well as those of Sydenham and Boerhaave.

If a village happens to be so small as not to afford a sufficient salary, it is annexed to one, two, or more of the neighbouring; and their common physician in such a case is enabled by them to keep a horse, a mule, or a vehicle. It is likewise the business of the corporation to provide a lodging for him whenever he is obliged to make any stay amongst them, and be absent a while from his usual place of residence. If the place, on the contrary, is too large for one physician, the corporation has more than one salary to appoint, and more than one *condotta* to dispose of.

The salaries, together with the regular presents, in many villages and provincial towns that I have visited, and where I have often made it a point to be particularly inquisitive on this head, are equivalent, upon a medium, to a capitation of two shillings; and few are the *condotta's* that contain less than three hundred souls, as few are likewise those that go beyond seven or eight hundred. So that our provincial physicians in the smallest places get about thirty or forty pounds a year, and seventy or eighty in the largest; which are sufficient competencies, as there is no provincial place throughout Italy, where  
a mid-

a middling family may not be decently maintained with the smallest of these sums.

Yet all our physicians do not go *in condotta*. Some of them remain for many years in their apprenticeships; act as substitutes to their principals; get patients for themselves when they think it time to venture on their own bottoms, and set up in capital towns, where some of them have got very desirable fortunes.

Whether this method of proceeding with regard to the practice of physic be preferable to that used in England I will not venture to determine. It may perhaps be less lucrative to some of the professors of medicine. But it seems to me more useful to the people; as they are in Italy much more generally, and even to the lowest, accommodated with the aid of physicians regularly bred, than the people in England.

The young men who apply to surgery, get through the world exactly after the manner of physicians. And as for the apothecaries, any body that chooses may set up for one, after having undergone proper examinations. But the physicians in every place of their residence are obliged to visit once a year at least the apothecaries shops, and have power to destroy all their decayed drugs and bad medicines. And here I must not omit to say, that within my memory the number of apothecaries is considerably decreased in Italy; and I was credibly informed  
in



in my late ramble there, that, in Florence only, more than twenty of them were in less than three years obliged to leave off trade, as our physicians are generally become averse to frequent prescriptions, and as our apothecaries are not allowed to play the physicians, as they commonly do in England.

With regard to those who apply to the study of the laws, they are more dependant on government than the physicians, surgeons, or apothecaries; for, when the government is apprised of their being properly qualified from the universities, they are sent as *podestà's* or *judges* in different places about the provinces. There a young lawyer administers both civil and criminal justice in cases of no great moment; but in cases of importance people must resort to higher tribunals.

When a young *podestà* has thus administered justice for three years, a person with the title of *findico* (or *findaco*, as the Tuscans pronounce it) is sent to make the tour of all the *podesteria's*, that is, of all the places where the *podestà's* reside. Public notice is then given in each respective place to the inhabitants of the arrival of the *findico*, and every body without exception is at liberty to lay before him in writing any complaint against the *podestà*. These complaints are immediately transmitted by the *findico* to the highest magistrate in the state, and by him examined, or given to deputies to examine. If they are found trifling or ill-grounded, they  
are

are disregarded; and, if just, redressed. But it will not be difficult to guess, that a *podestà* has no great chance of being promoted to a more lucrative *podesteria* if it appears by any complaint, that he has not administered justice with a steady balance. If he has, he is sent to a more profitable place for another triennium, and so on; nor is any *podestà* ever kept more than three years in the same place, that he may not (I suppose) contract very strong attachments to particular people, and run into any danger of partiality.

Besides applying to the *podesteria*'s, the young students in law take up the profession of an advocate in great towns, and have clients pretty much upon the plan of the counsellors of England. In this way of business they generally fare, as in England, according to their several proportions of knowledge and eloquence, of dexterity or artfulness: and from this class, as well as from that of the *podestà*'s, the chief magistrates and superior judges are chosen by government, when it is thought proper.

Mr. Sharp in the very beginning of his work sets out, soppishly enough, for a deep critic in the Venetian dialect, and speaks of the advocates of Venice: yet he does not venture to give his opinion with regard to their powers in oratory. He only describes them in their acts of peroration, and is very right when he says, that their voices are discord, their gesticulations approaching to those  
of

of madmen; and their general way of pleading noisy and uncivilised.

The Venetians value themselves much on their forcible eloquence, and think that their advocates are the only legitimate offspring of the ancient Roman orators, who certainly must have been very noisy speakers and great gesticulators, as they had often occasion to speak to multitudes more easily convinced by a strong tone of voice, and by violent motions of arms and hands, than by argument and reason. But as the Venetian advocates have in every cause only forty judges at most to convince, and as their debates are carried on in the halls of St. Mark's palace, and not in vast or open places, (as was often the case with the Romans) their stamping, their contorsions, and their vociferations always gave me great offence, and made me think, that their blustering manner of pleading was disadvantageous to their clients, as the best reasons offered in their support must in some measure be drowned in their own infernal clamour and agitations. Yet the Venetian noblemen who sit as judges, are so used to it, that they can very well separate their solid reasons from their roaring: and in the many years that I have lived in Venice I never had occasion to be much dissatisfied at any of their decisions in any cause, and scarcely ever heard any person complaining of their final sentences. But still the Venetian advocates would do better, in  
my

my opinion, to conform to the rest of Italy, and plead with a little more composure; with less bawling and brawling.

What our government do with regard to the students in law, our bishops do with regard to the students in divinity. These are sent as curates, rectors, or vicars from the capital towns to the villages or small towns in their districts as soon as they have got the order of priesthood. But they are not removed triennially as the *podestà's*. They succeed, like the physicians, to the vacancies of curacies, rectories, and vicarages as soon as they offer; and he who is thought the best qualified, is generally preferred to the other candidates by the electors appointed by the bishop.

The reader however is not to suppose these customs universal throughout Italy. The country being divided into many sovereignties of different forms, the laws and customs must of consequence differ in many places. Yet this is, in the main, the plan that each of them follows with regard to physicians, lawyers, and divines. To point out each particular way of providing for these three classes of people throughout our several sovereignties would prove tedious as well as endless.

Besides these roads that the studious of Italy have to employment and preferment, and through which they may attain to the highest posts both in church and state, the universities

universities are likewise open to them ; and to get professorships generally depends upon their reputation for knowledge. The salaries annexed to the professorships are partly paid out of some monies assigned to the universities by government, and partly arise from perquisites and fees belonging to the universities themselves. Few of our universities have lands and funds of their own as those of Oxford and Cambridge.

When a man is chosen professor, he has nothing to do but to continue reading his lectures, and increase in knowledge and credit, and he may be sure, at the very worst, of ending his days in comfortable circumstances if he reaches to old age, because his salary is generally augmented a little every seven years. Then after fourteen years service he may if he chooses quit the university, and retire upon half pay, and not seldom upon a whole one for life, if he has rendered himself useful and conspicuous.

The division of Italy into many sovereignties renders the inhabitants of different parts near as much strangers to one another as if they were the inhabitants of so many islands, because they seldom travel into one another's country. This hinders the growth of our capital towns, that cannot all be swallowed into one, as it is the case in France and England.

A country so constituted cannot afford any great means of pecuniary advantages to



such as devote their lives to those kinds of literature which are independent of the three professions. Hence the man who applies to poetry, history, astronomy, botany, and other branches of literature of no immediate necessity, cannot raise contributions from the public, as is the case in London and in Paris. When an Italian acquires knowledge without a view towards the university, he does it merely for the sake of doing something, and can scarce have any other reward than the consciousness and satisfaction of doing well. The trade of writing books is by no means a profitable trade in Italy, and few are those among us that get any thing by it. Half a dozen mercenary writers make a small penny in Venice with some translation from the French or the English; and I remember one Fabricio, a man of very good parts, who had a little more than three shillings a sheet for translating Chambers's dictionary, and Middleton's life of Cicero. This is almost the only way of getting a few ducats that lies open to our volunteers in literature; and a short and narrow way it is. Yet the Italians in general are very eager after fame; and every learned foreigner knows, that ever since the first revival of literature in Europe, they have constantly cultivated all sorts of sciences with very good success, and produced a considerable number of good books on every subject; for which they are perhaps to be praised above the studious of other nations, when

when it is considered that all their mental productions are given gratis. Morgagni, who has wrote so much, and whose works are in the hands of every good physician and anatomist through Europe, never got one hundred pounds from the booksellers, though many booksellers be grown rich by his works. Metastasio and Carlo Gozzi are the only two Italian writers who might have made money of their literary labours, as their works have the great advantage of being alike pleasing to the learned and the ignorant. But Metastasio made a present of his to one Bettinelli, a bookseller of Venice, who got more than ten thousand English pounds by publishing above thirty editions of them, which were sold with astonishing rapidity all over Italy; and Gozzi gave his, as I said, to an actress, who has not yet thought proper to make them public, and which would sell in my opinion quite as well and as fast as Metastasio's. As to Goldoni and Chiari, they scarcely got from the managers of the Venetian theatres ten pounds for each of their plays when they both were at the zenith of their undeserved popularity; and their profits from the printing of them were still a great deal smaller, not only because it is the general custom for our authors to make a present of their works to booksellers, who in return scarcely give a few copies of their books when printed; but

likewise because their plays began to be severely censured as soon as stripped of the gaudy ornaments of the scene. Our learned stare when they are told, that in England there are numerous writers who get their bread by their productions only, and that some amongst them can earn from booksellers a thousand sequens a year if they are laborious; or that a single play in London, and in Paris too, will sometimes produce as much to its author. They can scarcely be brought to believe such wonders, as not one in a hundred of them ever got with his quill as much in a twelvemonth, as the worst hackney-scribler in London can get in a week.

But the impossibility of making money by their literary labours, is not the only disadvantage that attends the learned of Italy. They are likewise to encounter many difficulties in the publication of their works. Nothing is printed in Italy without being first licensed by two, and sometimes more revisors appointed by the civil and the ecclesiastical government. These are to peruse every manuscript intended for the press; and sometimes their scrupulousness and timidity, sometimes their vanity or ill-temper, and sometimes their ignorance and insufficiency raise so many objections, that a poor author is often made quite sick with his own productions. Yet many new  
books

books \* are continually printing all over Italy, and in the number there is always some that has merit, This trial is very troublesome, I own; and should such a custom be intro-

\* To give an imperfect idea of our eagerness after fame, I beg the reader's leave to subjoin a list I have lately received from Italy of the works produced within these few years by the authors of Brescia only; and yet Brescia is a town not to be compared with Rome, Naples, and other Italian cities in point of literature.

*Paolo Gagliardi*, dead in 1761. His works. *Parere intorno allo antico Stato de' Cenomani*, &c. Padua, 1724. *Vita di Giovanni Cinelli*. Roveredo, 1736. Besides two fine editions of those fathers who were natives of Brescia, some Latin and Italian orations, and some translations from the Greek and Latin.

*Ramiro Rampinelli*, an Olivetan monk, dead in the year 1759. His works. *Lectiones Opticæ*, Brixia, 1760. See a farther account of this mathematician in Signora Agnesi's famous book intitled *Institutiones Analiticæ*.

*Fra Fortunato da Brescia*, a Franciscan friar, dead in 1754. *Geometriæ Elementa*, Brixia, 1734. *Philosophia Sensuum*, 2 vol. 4to. Brixia, 1735. *Elementa mathematica*, 4 vol. 1737, and many other works, some of which have undergone several editions.

*Conte Giambattista Suardi*, dead in 1766. *Nuovi Istrumenti per la descrizione di diverse curve antiche e moderne*, Brescia 1764; with other works mathematical and mechanical.

*Giambattista Scarella*, a Teatine friar. *Physica generalis methodo mathematico tractata*, 4 vol. Brixia, 1754. usque 1757. *De magnete*, 2 vol 4to. Brixia, 1759. *Elementa logicæ, ontologiæ, &c.* 4 vol. Brixia, 1763. *Commentarii XII. De rebus ad scientiam naturalem pertinentibus*, 1 vol. 4to. 1766.

introduced in England, I believe very few authors would have phlegm enough to submit to it. But long use has reconciled the Italians to it, and few are our printers who will dare the law, and print any book secretly.

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*Conte Giammaria Mazzuchelli*, dead in 1765. *Notizie Storiche intorno ad Archimede*, Brescia, 1737. *Vita di Pierro Aretino*, Padova, 1741. *Vita di Jacopo Bonfadio*, Brescia, 1766. This nobleman has likewise wrote an account of *Italian writers* in seventeen vol. fol. six of which only are printed; and several other works.

*Conte Francesco Roncalli*, living. *De aquis Brixianis*, 1 vol. 4to. *Europæ medicina*, 1 vol. fol. *Historia morborum*, 1 vol. fol. *Epistolæ et diplomata*, 1 vol. fol. besides many other less voluminous works.

*Conte Pierantonio Gaetani*, living. *Dialogo delle antiche Saltagioni. De magia et cabala. — De sybillis. — Museum Mazzuchellianum, seu numismata virorum doctrina prestantium*, Venetiis, 1761, 2 vol. fol.

*Giambattista Almici*, living. *Il dritto della natura e delle genti di Puffendorfo, rettificato, accresciuto, ed illustrato*, Venezia, 1757, 4 vol. 4to. *Offerwazioni critiche sopra lo spirito d'Elvezio. — De jure naturæ*; and other things.

*Antonio Brognoli*, living. *Il pregiudizio*, poema, Brescia, 1766. Several orations and poetical pieces.

*Giambattista Rodella*, a clergyman, living. *Vita del conte Giambattista Mazzuchelli*, Brescia, 1766. This Rodella is the continuator of the above-mentioned account of *Italian writers*.

*Giammaria Biemi*, living. *Storia Bresciana*, 11 vol. 4to. — *Vita di Giorgio Isrioto*, and other works.

*Carlo Doneda*, living. *Della Zeccha e Monete di Brescia*, Brescia, 1755.

*Conte Durante Duranti*, living. *Rime*. Brescia, 1755.

Abbat



An English author in reading this account, will bless himself that he was not born in that country of slavery; and I give him joy that he is a free Briton. I wish no ill to the liberty of the English press; and every body

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*Abbate Luchi*, a monk, living. *De monasterio Leonensi*, Rome, 1765.

*Bonaventura Luchi*, living. *De nuditate Protoplastorum et De serpente tentatore*, Patavii, 1755; with other works.

*Pietro Barzani*, living. *Vita del Panagiotti da Sinope*, in Greek and Italian, Brescia, 1760.

*Giulio Baitelli* and *Francesco Piazzoni*, both living, together with *Carlo Scarella*, who died but lately, have wrote many things much admired by learned antiquarians in the collection of the several works published about the ancient *Cenomani*.

*Fra Gaudenzio da Brescia*, a capuchin friar, living. *Istituzioni oratorie*, Brescia, 1760.

*Vintore da Coccaglio*, living. *Ricerca sistematica sul testo e sulla mente di San Prospero d' Aquitania nel suo poema contra gl' ingrati*, 1 vol. 4to. *Lo spirito filosofico, teologico, e ascettico di San Prospero d' Aquitania ne' suoi epigrammi*. Brescia, 1761. 1 vol. 4to.

*Giambattista Chiaramonti*, living. *Del paterno impero degli antichi Romani* — *Discorso sopra la felicità* — *Ragionamento intorno agli epistolari degli uomini illustri*. — *Di alcune verità fondamentali del gius di natura e della morale filosofia*. — *Sopra lo stato antico e presente della Valcamonica*. — *Delle accademie letterarie Bresciane*. — *Del commercio*. — *Vita del cavalier Vannetti*. —

*Elogi del padre Giampietro Bergantini*. — *E del conte Gianandrea Giovaneili*. All the above works, with some others, were severally printed from 1759 to 1767.

To this list I might add some other names, but this specimen suffices to give, as I said, some idea of the busy spirit of my countrymen when considered as authors.

who knows me personally, knows that I am a tolerable good Englishman, though born and bred in Italy. However, I cannot forget that at bottom I am still an Italian; and I know the mettlesome temper of my dear countrymen so well, that I should be very sorry to see them enjoy this English privilege. Unless the whole frame of the government were adjusted to this liberty, and of a piece with it, it could not fail of being mischievous to the state and to the satisfaction of private people, without encreasing literature or knowledge in any proportion. Such a liberty would hardly contribute to the multiplication of their *Metafasio's* and *Gozzi's*, of their *Finetti's* and *Morgagni's*. But I am quite clear on the other hand, that it would presently degenerate into licentiousness, and the times of the obscene *Aretino's* and the atheistical *Bruno's* be presently revived. Every scribbling *Abatino* of Rome would then speak in the most reviling terms of emperors and kings on their declaring a war or striking a peace somewhat clashing with the interests of the Romans. A ragged *Birricchino* of Bologna would then besmear with his blackest ink even the handsomest queens for their encouraging foreign manufacturers to settle in their dominions: and a stupid *Lazzerone* of Naples would then be lavish of the vilest epithets on any little commonwealth for permitting their ship-wrights to build and sell men of war to those who have money enough to buy them.

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No public character would then find shelter against that deluge of outrageous satire which would flow from the Italian pens; and every private reputation would be at the mercy of every scoundrel that could rhyme. In the greatest part of the Italian states, very few individuals have at present their digestion spoiled, or their sleep interrupted, by the political measures adopted by government in their respective countries: but were our press to be set free, many an oilman of Lucca, many a wine-merchant of Empoli, and many a tallow-chandler of Modena would then pretend to be a good deal wiser than secretaries of state, and wonder at kings and queens for not picking them out of their shops, and bringing them to the highest employments. Sedition, defamation, profaneness, ribaldry, and other such benefices would then quickly circulate through all our towns, villages, and hamlets. Irreligion would be substituted in a great measure to bigotry and superstition: the pope would be called antichrist and mother church a whore. Such would be, amongst others, the blessed effects of a free press in Italy, could we ever be indulged with it. But heaven avert we should! It is said that no body knows the pleasures of madness but madmen. The same may be justly said of the peculiar advantages of slavery: they are not to be conceived but by slaves. And if it is true that learning cannot flourish

but in the sunshine of liberty, and if it is impossible, without a freedom of the press, ever to have in Italy such writers as the Johnsons and the Warburtons of England, let Italy never have any, as long as their Alps and Apennines will stand: provided that on the other hand she never be ornamented by — *Cetera desunt.*

## C H A P. XV.

**I** Must not end my account of Italian literature without taking some notice of those societies of studious men, which go amongst us by the name of academies, and are to be found even in the smallest of our towns.

Soon after the revival of learning several of these societies were formed in many parts of Italy, and especially in Florence; a city deservedly celebrated for having been during the whole sixteenth century so eminent a seat of literature, as to be scarcely equalled by any other in Europe. Florence was in that century called the Athens of Italy.

Amongst the several academies formed in that capital, that which is called *Della Crusca*, soon rendered itself conspicuous above all others.

The members of this academy, towards the end of the sixteenth century, took their own language into consideration; and the esteem in which Italian was then held  
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throughout Europe, made them think it necessary to give the learned world an Italian dictionary.

Whatever progress lexicography may have made in all polished countries since that time, the compiling of a dictionary must then have been thought highly difficult and laborious, as there was not then extant any work that could direct their undertaking, and point out a proper method of compilation. Yet the academicians were not dismayed by the vast and dreary prospect. They parcelled out the intended work amongst the ablest of their fraternity, who made copious extracts of words from the books wrote in the three preceding ages; ranged them in alphabetical order; defined each word with much precision; marked their greater or less antiquity; distinguished the poetical from the common, and the elegant from the vulgar; pointed out their various meanings; illustrated even the least important particles with sufficient examples; gave the equivalent of each word in Greek and Latin; and in the space of about thirty years published the result of their labours by means of the press. Thus was the road made smooth to Furetiere and Johnson.

Such a performance on its first appearance was looked upon as a valuable acquisition to literature, and received by the learned with great and deserved applause. However it could not yet be considered as quite complete.



plete. Subsequent academicians now, that the first and greater encumbrances were in a good measure removed, retouched it in numberless places, and reprinted it several times both in the last and in the present age, carefully corrected and remarkably enlarged upon every new publication.

Their repeated diligence brought at last the Italian dictionary to such a degree of copiousness, that every future edition will, in my opinion, stand rather in need of retrenchments than of additions.

Of the many members of the academy who were employed in the forming of this important and necessary work, I will only mention Michelangelo Buonarroti, the author of the *Tancia* \*, already mentioned.

This ingenious poet saw the academicians much perplexed for want of examples out of printed books to authorise a class of words, which, though frequently occurring in conversation, are but seldom written. I mean those peculiar and technical words used by those who exert the meanest crafts, and deal in the lowest necessities of life.

To remove this difficulty Buonarroti composed a dramatic work of a very singular kind. This was a comedy which consisted of five pieces, each of five acts, or rather a comedy of five and twenty acts. His place of action he made a fair, or mart; and accordingly intitled it *La Fiera*. A simple plan,

\* See page 135.

plan, but far from contemptible, as it gave him room to introduce all sorts of people on the scene.

This odd drama was exhibited in Florence at the expence of the sovereign for five nights successively; that is, five acts, or one of the five comedies a night, and met with much applause. The great number of peculiar and technical words which Buonarroti brought into a small compass by means of this poetical expedient, is scarcely conceivable; and as his language is pure Tuscan, you may imagine that the academicians made good use of it in their dictionary.

Besides giving us this bulky production, the academicians encreased the stock of Italian literature with many other works, all tending to the greater embellishment and perfection of their tongue. Amongst these, the most noted are many volumes intituled *Prose Fiorentine*, and some severe strictures upon Tasso's poem of the delivery of Jerusalem. But neither of these two works bear any great proportion in point of learning and of use to their dictionary. The *Prose Fiorentine* were dictated by too bigotted an affection to the dialect of their metropolis, which they long endeavour to force upon all Italy as the only language to be employed either in speech or in books. And as to their criticisms on Tasso's Jerusalem, those that were employed by the academy to examine whether it was to be admitted amongst their models of good language,

language, betrayed too great a narrowness of mind in trying the language of such a poem by the standard of the Florentine dialect, and were justly taxed of over nicety and pedantry for having insisted with too much vehemence upon little imperfections with regard to grammar and syntax, passing over those blazes of genius which illuminate every one of his canto's. However, if their admiration of Ariosto's Orlando rendered them unjust in many respects to Tasso's Jerusalem, time in their default has at last settled the public judgment with regard to both our epic poets; and the magnificence of Tasso's numbers and diction, together with his great conformity to epic rules, will for ever overbalance Ariosto's superior gracefulness and rapidity of expression, and greater fertility of invention. The Jerusalem will always be the most striking, and the Orlando the most pleasing of the two poems.

But this academy, which consisted once of many men highly eminent in several parts of literature, is at present much upon the decline, because all that could be said about Italian language has been said over and over. Then the honour of admittance amongst its members is not now so eagerly courted as it was once, when personal merit was the only means to obtain it. It is therefore probable that the total annihilation of the academy is approaching: but such is the natural course of human things! They begin in weakness  
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and imperfection: acquire strength by small degrees, and last a while in vigorous maturity: then by small degrees, grow weak and imperfect again, until an end is put to their existence by the irresistible effects of time.

Next to the academy *Della Crusca*, that of the *Arcadia Romana* rose in repute. The business of this Arcadia was to correct, encrease, and beautify our poetry, as that of the Crusca to purify, illustrate, and fix our language.

The Arcadian life, as fabulous history represents it, was altogether innocent and simple. The inhabitants of that country lived on the mere products of their lands and flocks, and cultivated only those arts that are conducive to rural elegance and guiltless pleasure.

Upon this foundation Jacopo Sannazzaro, who lived in the beginning of the sixteenth century, composed in Italian a pastoral romance intitled *L'Arcadia*, which in Italy did him no less honour than his Latin poem *De Partu Virginis*, and out of Italy procured him several immitators, amongst whom the celebrated Sir Philip Sidney did not disdain to be numbered.

Sannazzaro's Arcadia is in prose, intermixed with eclogues in verse; and both his prose and his eclogues are so crowded with pastoral images and sentiments, that one would think the subject quite exhausted. Yet the Italians did not think so towards the middle of the last

last age, when some few verse-mongers of Rome took it into their heads again to cultivate that imaginary rural region.

If we credit Mario Morei, who published lately the history of this academy \*, those who first clubbed together in order to form it, were no more than *thirteen*, whose names Morei has thought proper to preserve. But such is the fondness of the Italians for verse and rhyme, that it soon consisted of as many thousands.

These thirteen people joined in a friendly body, to which they gave the affected title of *Arcadia Romana*; and amongst the few laws, written for them in very elegant Latin by the learned Vincenzo Gravina, there was one, by which it was enacted, that no person should be admitted into this society without first assuming a pastoral name.

It is impossible to conceive the eagerness with which this whimsical scheme of turning all sorts of men into imaginary shepherds was adopted both in Rome and out of Rome; and how the inflammable imaginations of my countrymen were fired by it! The very pope then reigning, with many cardinals and principal monsignori's suffered themselves to be persuaded, that this poetical establishment would prove infinitely advantageous to literature in general, and poetry in particular; nor did

\* Morei's book is intitled *MEMORIE istoriche dell' adunanza degli Arcadi. In Roma, 1761, in 8vo.* A poor book upon the whole.



did they disdain to be listed in the catalogue of these Arcadian twains, befriending their union with several privileges, assigning them a place to hold their assemblies in, and attending frequently at their meetings.

The fame of this new academy was soon spread all over Italy, and the rural compositions produced on their first outset by the Arcadians, met with so great and general a favour with a nation always eager after every novelty, especially poetical novelty, that all became ambitious of being admitted into such an academy. But as this wish could not instantly be gratified, no less than *fifty-eight* towns of Italy, according to Morei's account, resolved on a sudden to have like academies of their own, which they unanimously called *colonies of the Roman Arcadia*.

The madness of pastoral became now universal. Every body who had the least knack for poetry, was metamorphosed into a shepherd, and fell directly upon composing rustic sonnets, eclogues, ydylliums, and bucolics. Nothing was heard from the foot of the Alps to the farthestmost end of Calabria but descriptions of purling streams rolling gently along flowery meadows situated by the sides of verdant hills shaded by spreading trees, among whose leafy branches the sad Progne with her melancholy sister Philomela warbled their chaste loves, or murmured their doleful lamentations.

Rome

Rome being thus transformed by a poetical magic into a province of Greece, saw her capital turned to a cottage, the favourite habitation of Pan and Vertumnus; and the charming Flora did not scruple to walk hand in hand with the lovely Pomona about the Vatican and Saint Peter. No body was to be found in the streets but coy nymphs and frolicksome satyrs, or amorous fawns and buxom dryads. No body was now called by his christian or family-name: all our Antonio's, Francesco's, and Bartolommeo's were turned into Ergasto's, Dameta's, and Silvano's: and as neither the Arcadia nor her colonies refused admittance to the other sex, it may easily be guessed that every fair would now be a handsome nymph or an artless shepherdess, and that our Maria's, Orsola's, and Margherita's became on a sudden all Egle's, Licori's and Glicera's. None of our cicisbeo's dared now to peep out of his hut, but with a hook in one hand, and a flute in the other.

I shall not take upon me to enumerate the advantages that Italian poetry has received from our fanciful Arcadians and their colonists. To say, that in the vast number none reached at excellence, would be both incredible and unjust. Some of them really wrote pieces that are pleasing enough in their kind. But what is excellence in pastorals? No great matter in my opinion. The imagery and sentiments suitable to this species  
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of poetry cannot be drawn from any system of life that ever was lived by any people, as no country is to be found upon genuine records, whose inhabitants joined politeness to simplicity, and innocence to knowledge. Some amongst our favourers of pastoral poetry have been so absurd as to pretend, that the wandering Arabs, and even many of the Tartar nations, have lived, and actually live such a life, because they feed chiefly upon the product of their flocks and herds, and know so much of arts and sciences as to claim a wide difference from the savages of Africa and America. But are the manners of the Arabs and Tartars really those of poetical shepherds? Their robberies and continual incursions upon their neighbours, besides the general cast of their manners, would make but a very indifferent figure in pastoral poetry, which excludes all ideas of violence and rapine, or permits it only to wolves and foxes! Pastoral life being then a mere creature of poetical brains, and without any archetype in nature, must of course be useless for want of application: and whatever is useless cannot deserve any great share of our esteem, be it ever so perfect in its kind. Our imaginary shepherds are therefore justly fallen into contempt, as it has been the case these many years. The Arcadian colonists are at last nearly annihilated throughout Italy; and the *Arcadia Romana* consists now only of a few *Abatino's*,  
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who still persist to meet sometimes in order to recite their meagre verses to each other; and they still choose a *Custode Generale*, or *Chief Herdsman*, whose most important business is to make a penny of his place; and this he chiefly effects by sending Arcadian patents to the English travellers on their arrival at Rome: by which trick he aggregates their lordships and honours to the august body of the Roman Arcadians. Those patents are seldom refused, as they never cost above nine or ten shillings given to the *Abatino's* who offer them gratis. By means of so small an expence their lordships and honours may become, if they choose, directly and intimately acquainted with very skilful managers of love-intrigues, as a good many of our present Arcadians are far from being so simple and innocent as the ancient ones of Greece.

Besides the poor remains of the *Crusca* and the *Arcadia*, there are in Rome and in other of our towns other Academies composed of people who pretend to ingenuity in one thing or other. At Rome there is the *Accademia di San Luca*, in which none but painters, statuaries, architects, and engravers are admitted, and it matters not of what country or religion they are. These academicians have chosen for their patron the evangelist St. Luke, changed into a painter by tradition, though he be termed a physician in holy writ. Some of our searchers into ancient records

records pretend, that in the twelfth century there lived one *Mastro Luca* of Cesena, (if I remember right the name of his native place) who would paint and carve nothing but Madona's, out of devotion to our blessed lady. They say that the Madona's of Loretto, Bologna, Caravaggio, Varallo, and many others in Italy, now very miraculous, owe their formation to this artist, whose ingenuity bore but little proportion to his piety. The christian name of this *Mastro Luca* was *Santo*. Hence arose the vulgar notion that those Madona's were painted by *St. Luke*. Whatever truth there be in this scrap of erudition, this notion has spread so far and wide, that the famous *Neustra Senora del Pillár* actually worshipped in Saragozza, and that still more famous of *Monferrate* in Catalonia, were likewise *St. Luke's* works in the opinion of the Spaniards. I beg Mr. Sharp's pardon for this ridiculous digression in honour of our Madona's, and return straight to our academies.

At Naples there is the *Ercolana*; and the business of its members is to explain as well as they can the pictures, statues, inscriptions, and other such curiosities dug out of *Herculaneum*; and six large volumes of their explanations are already published under the patronage of the present king of Spain, who has ordered them to be distributed as presents to persons of distinction as fast as they come out of the press.

At



At Cortona there is the *Accademia Etrusca* for the illustration of the Etruscan antiquities which are discovered in Tuscany and in the neighbouring provinces from time to time; and I hear that monsignor Mario Guarnacci, (a very learned prelate who lives at Volterra, and a member of that academy) is going to publish a new, and very considerable collection of such antiquities.

At Florence, about Galileo's time, was instituted the *Accademia del Cimento*, that is, of *experimental philosophy*. It is pity that it did not last long, and that its members, amongst whom were Bellini, Borelli, Torricelli, Redi, and other famous men, printed but few of their *Experiments*. However it has been lately succeeded by the *Accademia d' Agricoltura*, which I hope will prove near as useful, if not more so. And if I am not mistaken, there is likewise another called *La Società Colombaria*, whose members apply to natural philosophy, and most particularly to botany.

At Venice there is one, the appellation of which I cannot now recollect; but its institution seems to me very laudable. The members of it are all young lawyers, who debate before-hand in their meetings those causes, that are to be debated in their courts of judicature. Some of the members speak for the plaintiffs, some for the defendants, and with as much earnestness as if they were in the real presence of the judges. Thus they  
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endeavour to qualify themselves for the profession which they intend to follow.

At Bologna there is the *Accademia de' Filarmonici*, in which none but professors of music are admitted; and father Martini, who is looked upon in Italy as the most learned man in the science of music that we ever had, is one of its principal members.

At Vicenza (Palladio's native country) there was an academy of architects; and I think it is not yet quite extinct. At Milan there is the *Accademia Milanese*, or *De' Trasformati*, which boasts of many men skilful in various branches of literature. At Turin I am told there is now one patronised by the duke of Savoy, whose members apply to algebra, geometry, and all parts of mathematics. Amongst them there is Lagrangia, a young gentleman; (lately called to Berlin by the king of Prussia) and I have heard that monsieur D'Alembert and other French mathematicians look upon this Lagrangia as the greatest genius now known in Europe with regard to the science that contemplates whatever is capable of being numbered or measured. But it would be too prolix to enumerate all our societies\*, whose chief aim

\* For a fuller account of our academies see the first volume of a book intituled *Storia e ragione d'ogni poesia*, written by Francesco Saverio Quadrio, an ex-jesuit, who died not long ago. In that volume are found the names of above five hundred academies, with a short account of each.

is always the cultivation of some branch or other of science or of art. I own that arts and sciences are not generally forwarded much by our academies, as far as I can observe: yet they are upon the whole rather useful than pernicious, and answer the ends of society if not of science. They stand in the place of the clubs in England, which bring people together, and give them the means of becoming friends.

## C H A P. XVI.

THE mentioning of St. Luke's academy in the foregoing chapter has put me in mind of those arts which have obtained in England the appellation of *polite*, and go in Italy by that of *Arti del Disegno*.

These arts have in this age engaged a great deal of the attention of the English gentlemen, and they are certainly somewhat improved in this country. But I cannot join in the insulting lamentation, which I have frequently heard here, that poor Italy is at present in such a low condition with regard to those arts, that nothing now is to be seen beyond the Alps, but what betrays the most shocking want of judgment, the greatest poverty of taste, and the most deplorable absence of genius.

It is really dismal to hear some pathetic English orators enlarge with the saddest emphasis on the present degeneracy of Italy,  
and

and on the astonishing progress that painting, sculpture, architecture, and engraving have lately made in this island, where they take the most gigantic strides. Some of them declare that the late exhibition in Spring-gardens excels any thing that can be seen in Europe: some think that their countrymen will soon rival Greece and Rome in arts as they do in literature; and others assure with the most solemn gravity, that a great number of the British artists would be looked upon as highly eminent, were they to quit this blessed isle, and go to settle on the banks of the Arno, the Reno, and the Tyber.

This fashion of crying down my unhappy countrymen on this particular, is now become little less than universal in this kingdom: and I am very sorry that I am under an absolute impossibility of producing any argument drawn from the polite arts themselves against assertions like these; much less can I run into any parallel between ours and the English artists, as I cannot pretend to any profound skill in these matters, my studies having lain another way.

However, as the Italians, according to the old notion, are a very revengeful people, I cannot here stifle my resentment at this outrageous treatment; and must beg leave to tell these formidable connoisseurs, that the connoisseurs of Italy, (who have as good a title to judge as they have, and are no more to be suspected of national partiality than the

virtuoso's of England) affirm, that the English painters, generally speaking, are only able to copy nature in the lump, without any nice discrimination between her beauties and defects: that they do not greatly understand drawing, and apply more willingly to colouring, because colouring infallibly catches the eyes of the stupid vulgar, and drawing is in a great measure thrown away when the multitude is to judge: that whenever they attempt any thing historical, they know little how to groupe many figures together, because their studies are generally shortened by the desire of getting money; and that they have so little of the poetical genius, that their invention is still far from deserving to be compared even to that of the French Poussins, Les Bruns, and Le Sueurs, or the Spanish Velasques, Valdes, and Murillo's.

Some of the Italian artists indeed will allow very freely, that Italy cannot actually boast of so enchanting a pencil as Reynold's, and of so vivifying a chissel as Wilton's. They look with complacence on the queen of Cotes and the Elisha of West; and they praise the landscapes of Barret and the hories of Stubbs. They are even so impolitical as to say, that Stuart, Adams, and Chambers might add to the beauty of Florence and the magnificence of Rome. But for composition in historical painting they are far from giving up the pre-eminence; and whilst they admire the genius of the English architects in the



the small works in which they have been engaged, they will not allow of their superiority; and are far from entertaining that high opinion of the collective body of their pretended rivals, which the English connoisseurs seem to entertain.

Who is in the right, and who is in the wrong? The Italians or the English? Upon my word I cannot tell, because, as I said, I am not greatly conversant in these matters.

Declining therefore whatever the artists and connoisseurs might urge on each side of this knotty question, I will here endeavour to assist the cause of my defenceless countrymen with some arguments independent of the rules and knowledge of the polite arts: and yet drawn from a few facts not entirely foreign to the purpose. Let then the judicious reader derive from them what inference he pleases. It would be unreasonable that the Italians should judge for themselves. Other Nations shall judge for them.

You must know then, that in Madrid there is a royal palace which has been these thirty years a building, as I was credibly informed. It is a huge pile; and, for size, nothing either in England or in Italy can be compared to it\*: and hugeness will always imply magnificence and awfulness. The ar-

\* The Spaniards say that it has cost twelve millions of *pedos duros*, that is, near three millions of pounds. In all probability they exaggerate; but still it must have cost a great deal.

chitect was one Philip Juvara, an Italian, who, before he went to Spain, built the church of Superga on one of the highest hills near Turin, and some other grand edifices in Piedmont and in other parts of Italy. This Juvara has been dead a few years, but the building was carried on under the direction of one Sacchetti, another Italian, who was Juvara's pupil. Some of the ceilings, walls, and staircases of that royal palace in Madrid, were likewise painted by some of our modern Italians; that is, by Tiepolo, Corrado, Amiconi, and several others, whose names I cannot now recollect. Then at Aranjuez, a country-seat of the Spanish king, many parts of the house are painted by the same Italian artists who beautified the royal palace in Madrid; and in both places they have formed such large and well-design'd groupes of figures, that have astonished me as well as some others who seemed less ignorant of the polite arts than I am. And is it not probable that those princes who employed so much time, and went to a vast expence to construct and adorn such edifices, followed same at least in the choice of a country from which they took their architects and painters.

Besides these facts, this present king of Sardinia has a gallery in Turin, and some country-houses near Turin, which have all been built and painted by Alfieri, Bomonte, and other living artists of Italy; and those  
pictures

pictures also are made up of such multitudes of figures so skilfully composed, drawn in such various attitudes, and so clearly characterised, that if painting is to be compared with poetry, it is there in my poor opinion, and not in any of the English exhibitions, that the parallel will run between those arts, and run both in the epic and the lyric.

I have often been told by people of veracity, that at Petersburg, Vienna, Varsavia, Berlin, Stockholm, and in many other parts of Europe there are many Italian artists in the service of many sovereigns, who are by them employed in adorning their magnificent mansions. And will any one dare to say, that this concurrence of many sovereigns in favour of our artists has risen from Italian partiality? And what is there in the English exhibitions that must determine emperors and czars, kings and margraves to send for architects and painters to England?

I have then heard it reported, that Battoni, Bottani, and Valle of Rome; Franceſchiello of Naples; Zocchi and Feretti, of Florence; Lelli and the two brothers Gandolfi of Bologna; Fontebasso, Orsolini, Pitteri, and Canaletto of Venice; count Arnaldi \* of

\* Count Arnaldi, who is a man of great learning as well as an architect, has printed a book intitled *IDEA d' un TEATRO nelle principali sue parti simile à teatri antichi*. Vicenza 1762. In 4to.

Vicenza; Signaroli of Verona; Borra \* of Turin; and a great many more of our painters, statuaries, architects, and engravers, some still living, and some but lately dead, are looked upon as tolerably ingenious in their several ways, even by some of the English lords and gentlemen who do us the honour to visit our country. I will take it for granted, that these people are neither Raphaels nor Michelangelo's; neither Bramante's, nor Bandinello's: but still it is confidently asserted by the Italian connoisseurs, that their works do not betray any servile imitation; and that each of them has a manner of his own, which bespeaks some power of invention. However, what signifies enumerating the names of modern Italian artists, whose works have never been seen by the greatest part of my English readers? Let them all go for nothing, and let me remark only as a matter of less consequence, upon which I do not insist, that two pictures of Casanova were but the other day universally allowed to be the best in the Pall-mall exhibition. And yet Casanova is not universally allowed to be the greatest painter of modern Italy.

Putting now these few facts together, and indulging a little partiality in favour of Italy,

\* This Borra, who is now one of the architects of the king of Sardinia, is the same that was taken to Palmyra and Darbeck by the late Mr. Daukins, and the designer of those monuments now so well known to the English.

will it be thought very impertinent if I advise some of your English connoisseurs and artists, to lower their tone a peg or two when they set about reviling the artists of Italy? They ought certainly to forbear treating them in a contemptuous manner, at least until foreign sovereigns send for English artists to erect their palaces and villa's, and to paint their ceilings and staircases.

But here some sturdy Briton will be apt to answer me with an angry pshaw, that the English artists would be very great fools to quit their country, and go upon any such errand, as there is no money to be got any where but in England. Yet if it happened that any emperor or king, czar or margrave, should ever send for any of the English artists, I will tell them without laughing, that they need not be afraid to venture upon such a jaunt, as I can assure them, that there are Louisd'ores in France, doubloons in Spain, ducats in Germany, roubles in Muscovy, and sequins in Italy in such quantities, as will certainly suffice to reward the greatest abilities. Several Italian artists have made large fortunes by going to serve sovereigns in distant countries: and it must certainly be an encouraging reflection to any English artist, that upon a parity of merit he will chance to meet with a parity of reward. And will it not be glorious, after a few years absence, to come back home, and be able to boast, that one is grown rich out of



England, and has contributed his mite at the same time to the greater renown of one's own country?

The arts in England certainly meet some encouragement; and some of your artists are actually growing as rich as cornfactors and stockjobbers: but this they only do in the way of dealing, which is a way of encouragement that will never be the best excitement of genius, as it never will leave it free to exert itself. An allowance even of a small independence, which takes away from an artist all uneasiness about his subsistence, is a much better encouragement than larger sums paid for works that are bespoke and prescribed. Some such pensions are paid even in modern Italy: Bomonte the painter and Alfieri the architect, have each five hundred English pounds a year from the king of Sardinia; and Vanvitelli had a good pension from the pope, and a better from the present king of Spain when king of Naples, in consequence of his having given the plans of the lazzeretto and mole at Ancona, and of the royal palace at Caserta. Yet these encouragements are nothing equal to what they were in our golden age, when our sovereigns and great people made it a point to patronise that kind of talents. The artists of Italy then, did not only get a few hundred pieces of gold every year, as the present English artists do, but they were rewarded with houses and fields, decorated with  
ribands

ribands and crosses, and honoured with the intimate friendship of grand-dukes and popes.

But let us grant for a moment, that the polite arts are as much upon the decline in Italy as they are getting forwards in England; still you cannot deny, gentlemen, that you have not yet a school which you can yet properly call your own? You must still admit, that you are obliged to go to Italy to be taught, as it has been the case with your present best artists? You must still submit yourselves to the direction of Italian masters, whether excellent or middling? Still make your advantage of that kindness with which they point out to you the path that you are to follow if you will reach at any perfection in your profession? And since this is the case, as it is, in a great measure at least, why will you abuse and run down those, who far from proving invidious, endeavour your improvement whenever you give them an opportunity? Does this not look a little like beating your own nurse because she is grown somewhat superannuated; and like spitting in your mamma's face because she begins to doat a little?

But since I am about telling my mind upon this subject, let me inform my readers, that I have heard of some English young artists, who are so countenanced by the Italian nobility, as to be often employed by them, and rewarded for their labours in such a manner.

manner as to be enabled to live and study there with more ease than they would otherwise do ; nor can any body deny with justice to the Italians the merit of countenancing abilities wherever they find them, without the least reluctance, without minding whether they are possessed by a native or a stranger, by an orthodox or an heterodox ; and I am personally acquainted with an English painter of very distinguished parts, lately returned from thence after an absence of ten years from home, who has assured me, that he shall never sufficiently praise my countrymen upon this head.

It is then a notorious fact that the academy of St. Luke has many times adjudged the first premiums to foreigners, English, Dutch, French, and Spaniards, without the least shadow of national partiality. A succession of strangers, and many of them heretics (as our hotheaded divines call them) have shifted, and do still shift in Italy, when furnished with a profession and a little dose of prudence ; and instead of being envied, crossed, and molested by national partiality, they have been, and are still, assisted and caressed, esteemed and employed. Nor does this Italian cosmopolitism and philanthropy extend singly to the polite artists who come to study or to live amongst us. The cultivatures of other professions meet in Italy with the same treatment. To name only the professors of music, an art in which we still excel all other nations

ons by the unanimous consent of all Europe; have we not used the Spanish Terradella like our Venetian Galuppi, and the Saxon Haffe like our Neapolitan Porpora? Handel himself was amongst us when very young; and though far distant then from that perfection which put him after upon a par with our Pergolesi's and our Scarlatti's, yet he lived honourably amongst us, and had cause to remember with gratitude to the end of his days his Italian patrons as well as his Italian masters. Many natives of other countries have lived very well, and even raised considerable fortunes in several parts of Italy, both in the military and the political service of our different states; and I have myself personally known an English governor of Nice in Provence, and a Scotch governor of Casal in Monferrat. None of our commercial towns are shut to the merchants of any nation, and rendered difficult of access by double duties of custom-houses and other restraints on foreigners. At Venice, Leghorn, Ancona, Genoa, Naples, and other places, there are actually many strangers, English especially, who trade with as full a freedom as if they were born amongst us; and they often retire to their own countries with the fortunes they have accumulated, without raising the least murmur, and without receiving the least molestation. These, Mr. Sharp, these were the manners and customs of Italy which you had to describe; and here you had

had an argument to expatiate upon, much more worthy of your pen than the dimensions of our theatres, and the lemonades of our ladies. But, without saying any thing invidious of the English, of whose noble qualities I have ever been one of the most sanguine admirers, could I not ask this mighty censor whether strangers are so well used in England as they are in Italy? Whether the laws of his country are so hospitable as those of mine? Yet Italy is a land swarming with revengeful murderers, and England is full of people who boast of good-nature exclusive of all other nations, as I have already observed.

But I must beg the reader's pardon for this second digression, perhaps a little too long and too warm. Yet to make him amends for my indiscretion, I will now come straight to the conclusion of the little I had to offer on the subject of the polite arts, and will only add, that though these arts be at present in a most promising condition in England, and much upon the decline in Italy, yet the English are still far from being what the Italians have been. The names of the great men mentioned by Vertue and Walpole in the volumes printed at Strawberry-hill, will be for ever little names when compared to those mentioned by Vasari and Borghini; nor have yet the Italians any urgent need to run abroad for improvement, as long as they can boast to have amongst them their Corrado's, Signaroli's, Vanvitelli's, and Piranesi's,



Piranesi's, and as long as they can spare for England their Angelica's, Cipriani's, Bartolozzi's, and Zuccarelli's.

## C H A P. XVII.

**I**T is very possible I may be mistaken in supposing, that among the numerous readers of this book there will be many of the fair sex: But I find something so delightful in this hope, that I readily admit it: my imagination even represents them as anxiously expecting from a native of Italy, who has the presumption to address them in their native tongue, a full account of the present state of music in that musical country; as wishing for the amplest information concerning the notions and management of our ladies with regard to this great source of female amusement; and as longing to hear me expatiate on the powers of those amongst our sweet songsters, who have not yet blessed the Haymarket with their appearance, and thrown them into ecstasies with their *Caro's* and their *Addio's*.

I heartily wish it was in my power to give them full satisfaction upon this point. But unfortunately I am very much a stranger to the transactions of the musical world; and my skill in harmony is so small, that it never went beyond the roaring of a Venetian ballad when a flask of Montepuliano has gone several rounds; and my love of opera's and  
burletta's,

burletta's, far from being of the enthusiastic kind, never hindered me from building the most magnificent Spanish castles while Egizello was melting multitudes with skilful shakes and learned cadences; and often have I been very seriously meditating on the badnets of my neighbour's snuff, while Carestini with a prodigious *mezza di voce* was gradually pumping up the admiration of two hundred Italian gentildonna's.

I must therefore in this my scantiness of knowledge of these important matters, and to my no small mortification, say to the English ladies what Ariosto said to those of Italy before he begun a silly story, *voltate questo canto e nol leggete*, "*pass over this chapter and read it not*," as I am sure, that they will not find in it any thing worth their perusal with regard to Italian music and Italian musicians. I really can do nothing else in the following paragraphs to the end of this chapter, but run over what the musical Mr. Sharp has told us in his itinerary letters upon this interesting subject, relative to certain matters of fact which fall within the compass of ordinary observers, and which, with an attention to truth, Mr. Sharp and I (equally ignorant in the science) are equally capable of remarking.

Mr. Sharp says, that *very few Italian gentlemen practise the fiddle or any other instrument*: that *all the young ladies* (take notice of his  
emphatical

emphatical word ALL) are placed in convents where they remain until they marry or take the veil, and where music is no part of their education; and that after marriage it cannot be supposed that any woman undertakes so laborious a task as that of making a proficiency on the harpsichord. For these reasons, does he add with great wisdom, an Italian audience has no other pleasure in melody than what pure nature affords; whereas in England the fine ladies have also an acquired taste; the effects of assiduity and cultivation.

These, with Mr. Sharp's leave, are the remarks of a careless talker, who has little to say, and yet is resolved to say something right or wrong. What opportunity could Mr. Sharp have of ascertaining the number of those Italian gentlemen who practise the fiddle or other instruments? And by what means did he discover that *none* of the Italian ladies are taught music?

However it is true that few Italian gentlemen practise the fiddle or other instruments, relatively to the number of those Italian gentlemen who do not: and if this is his meaning, he is certainly right. But if he means relatively to the number of the English gentlemen who do it, it will be very difficult for him to prove such an assertion: and I for my part am far from subscribing to it, as I have visited many more towns of Italy than he has done, and know that in each of them many gentlemen apply to music.

Yet,

Yet, as it is impossible to ascertain this point, I will give it up with all my heart, and grant that the balance is in favour of England: but I must say at the same time, that if there are but few amongst our gentlemen who practise the fiddle or other instruments relatively to the number of those who do not, this happens because the Italians in general do not look with any additional degree of regard upon a gentleman on account of his attaining to any excellence in music. And so far they seem to me not to differ greatly from the English, who value a gentleman not much the more for his being a good fiddler or singer.

It may be said with truth, that music is so bewitching, that whoever makes a point of reaching to any perfection in it, frequently loses all appetite for nobler acquisitions; and few are the modern heroes, who, like the king of Prussia and the hereditary prince of Brunswic, possess the talent of allying the soft music of Italy with the rough tactics of Germany. The music of Italy, though much more scientific than that of other European countries, naturally tends to enervate the mind. Hence our Italian performers, though in the lump justly preferred to all other performers of Europe for superior powers of delighting, are justly derided for greater effeminacy and folly. It is difficult to tell why logic and common sense forsake so many of them when music is out of the question;  
and

and yet this is generally the case, though music, like all other arts and sciences, has its foundation in common sense and logic.

If the ancients in some commonwealths encouraged, and in some cases enjoined the study of music as subservient even to military excellence, and if it be true, that they had military tunes which on a day of action inflamed combatants to an astonishing degree, their music must have been of a taste much different from that now prevailing in Italy; which, far from having any power of increasing courage or any manly virtues, has on the contrary a tendency towards effeminacy and cowardliness, whatever little joy or pleasing tumult it may have the power to awake in the heart of a soldier when turned into a military march. The Italians therefore, I mean those of weight and consideration, as well as the English, are perhaps not so blameable when they condemn those puny gentlemen, who acquire such skill in this charming art, as to feel its minutest niceties, and be of course in rapture with the languishing *Cecchina's* of Piccini, and the fainting *Paforella's* of Galuppi.

Thus much for what belongs to the first part of the harmonious Mr. Sharp's observation. With regard to the second, I must take the liberty to deny what he has in his letters repeatedly affirmed with great confidence, that *the Italians place all their young ladies*



*ladies in convents, and leave them there until they take the veil or marry* But as the confutation of this assertion, which he has copied out of Misson's \* travels, would lead me too far from the present subject, which is the manners and customs of the Italians with regard to music and musicians, I will give it a place in the next chapter; and going on with this, I will only say, that Mr. Sharp was right when he asserted that *music is not much thought of in the education of our young ladies*. And perhaps our nobility and genteel people are far from being wholly in the wrong when they think music no very great, and in some respects a dangerous accomplishment in women. Our churches and our theatres render music very common throughout the country; and what is common cannot be much prized. Yet we conceive that music is not an eligible study for our young ladies, and this for a very important consideration.

Our

\* Misson says in one place, that the Italians send their girls to monasteries in their infancy, and dispose of them in marriage without their knowledge, and even frequently without letting them see their future husbands, and that in making marriages they do not trouble themselves with love, affection, or esteem, but mind nothing, save kindred and riches. And in another Place, Not only at Venice, but every where else, the girls are sent to nunneries in their infancy, and they are usually married or at least betrothed without seeing their husbands. Many pages of Mr. Sharp's book contain nothing but poor repetitions of the false assertions of that French presbyterian.

Our climate quickens our sensibility in such a manner, that music affects us infinitely more than it does other nations. Let your imagination represent to you an Italian lady young and beautiful, with all that warmth of constitution peculiar to her country, arrayed in the thinnest silk favourable to the sultry season, sitting at her harpsichord, her fingers in busy search of the most delicate quavers, and languishing to a *Mi sento morir* of one of our most feeling composers! Where is the judicious parent who would wish to see his child in so dangerous a situation.

I would not however by speaking thus, be thought one of those lovers of subtilties and paradoxes, who derive the various characters of nations from the variety of their climates, and who can account even for their predominant virtues or vices by the latitudes where they are placed. Yet I think it an indisputable fact, that if music is more the growth of Italy than of any other part of Europe, it may in some degree be attributed to the cleanness and warmth of our atmosphere, which gives to the generality of our women not only sweeter throats than to those of other countries, but makes them likewise feel with more sensibility the charms of music. It may therefore, for aught I know, be very proper for English young ladies to be taught music; since nature, so partial to them in all other respects, has thought fit to deny to the generality of them the power to learn and execute

execute those tender passages and melting cadences which constitute the chief excellence of our music: and the temperature of their climate too, may guard the English ladies against these lively impressions, which in them I do not censure: but our young ladies would be too much and too often affected by them, if we were so imprudent as to put it in their power to give themselves at pleasure such a seductive amusement. Music may be cultivated in the soil of England without any danger, because, like an exotic plant, it will never spread so as to prove hurtful by its luxuriancy; but we must rigidly lop it in Italy, where it grows naturally so fast, as to make us tremble at the balefulness of its influence. Are not such of the English wise who keep their misses from frequenting the theatre, where too much harmless embracing and too much kissing might throw their untutored fancies into some disorder? A similar motive induces the Italians to keep their *signorina's* from learning music, as they are sensible that music, though perfectly guiltless in itself, would certainly discompose their little hearts, and more easily perhaps than the indecencies of a British stage.

There is likewise another motive which keeps Italian parents from letting their girls turn musical. I mean the general character of immorality which our best singers and masters of music have seemed studious to acquire

acquire in this age. Mr. Locke, in his treatise on education, recommended some manual trade for well-born children, by way of furnishing them with an innocent occupation in their leisure hours when arrived at the years of manhood. But Mr. Locke's recommendation has been justly disregarded by his countrymen; because manual trades cannot be taught but by base mechanics, whose low manners might prove contagious to their tender pupils. The Italian parents would have a greater inconvenience to contend with, should they venture to make their girls great proficient in music. They are therefore right when they avoid this danger, or when they suffer them only to learn a little from musical women; which they condescend to do in several of our towns, and especially in Venice, whose musical hospitals furnish them with female teachers, who know so much of playing and singing as to be able to give a girl some little taste of both, but cannot easily lead her to that excellence in music which might prove pernicious to innocence and virtue.

Such is the voluptuous and wicked turn of mind that music gives in Italy to the generality of its professors, the singers especially, that it has brought them into universal disrepute. So great is the contempt which our singers have long merited of us by their corruption, that no excellence in their way ever entitles them to our esteem, whatever

whatever acts of affability and generosity their abilities may sometimes extort from us. There is not one gentleman or lady in a hundred throughout Italy, who speaks to any of them in the third person singular, which is our civil way of speaking to one another. To the singers and the generality of musicians, we always speak in the second person plural, which is our stile of condescension, or in the second person singular, which is our contemptuous or authoritative stile when we talk to our inferiors: and Caffarello himself, one of the most scientific singers that ever Italy produced, must be contented to be talked to in *Voi* or *Tu* by any body who is one degree above a shop-keeper, though Caffarello be actually possessed of an estate of four thousand English pounds a year procured by singing.

Our singers we put on the same level with our dancers; and our disdain for both these classes of people goes so far, that we most commonly give their names some diminutive termination, which according to the genius of our language, makes them ludicrous or mean; or we call them by some derisory nick-name, which is still worse. Thus for instance signor Manzoli is generally called *Succianòci*, that is, *Nut-sucker*, for his playing some trick in his singing like that of sucking a walnut; signora Gabrieli is scarcely known in Italy but by the nick-name of *La Coggbetta*, the little cook, because she was the daughter of



of a cook; and signora Agujari is termed *La Bastardella*, the little bastard, because she was a foundling: thus our dancers are seldom known but by the appellations of *Gambadiferro*, Iron-leg; *Spaccatavole*, Board-cleaver; *Schizzetta*, Flat-nose, and the like, which always imply contempt and derision.

Those who have read the *Conscious Lovers*, or seen it acted, when they read this account will probably think that in point of manners the Italians have not yet attained so high a degree of politeness as the English or the French have; or at least the author of that play thinks they ought to have. But such the Italians are, and such, since I am about it, I must confess they are.

Mr. Sharp, whose tenderness of bowels is certainly greater than his power of investigation, appears very much concerned at our considering the opera as a place of *rendezvous and visiting*, rather than as a temple sacred to the awful deities of harmony and melody; and he is almost angry with us, because we do not seem in the least to attend to the music, but laugh and talk through the whole performance without any restraint, so that we cover intirely the voices of the singers by our conversing so loudly together. He was prepossessed of this custom of ours before he left England; but had no idea it was carried to such an extreme. He had been informed that, though the Italians indulged this humour in some degree; yet when  
a ja-

*a favourite song was singing, or the king was present, (I suppose he means the king of the Italians) they observed a due silence: but he must deny both these facts from what he has seen.*

What a deal of wisdom lavished on so trifling a subject as that of an Italian opera! But see how shamefully poor strangers are imposed upon by these naughty writers of travels? Poor Mr. Sharp had been made to believe, that the grave Italians observed *due silence* at an opera when a favourite song was sung, or a king was present; and none of the two facts proves true! Who will ever give credit hereafter to such story-tellers! However, thank our stars, a more accurate observer of Italian customs and manners has at last visited that distant region; is gone to the opera at Naples; has found to his great astonishment that two facts of so infinite importance have been grossly misrepresented; has denied them of course; and has thus rendered Old England much wiser than it was before his great discovery.

But though I may heartily join with his countrymen, and give Mr. Sharp my most cordial thanks for having imparted his useful discovery to them; yet I cannot thank him for having told them, that *the Italians learn music because trade in Italy is despicable, and laborious employments are held in detestation.*

Mr. Sharp is certainly mistaken here; and I must in my turn deny both these facts. It  
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is rather music, than trade or laborious employments, that is despicable in Italy, and held in detestation. If by laborious employments Mr. Sharp means agriculture and manufactures, (and what else can he mean?) I tell him plainly that neither of them is detested by the Italians; for, were that the case, our farmers, traders, and manufacturers could not certainly be so numerous as they are; nor live as they live. They do not indeed in Italy rank with the nobility; nor do they in any country: but they have their natural degree of estimation, and these employments are neither *despised* nor *detested*. The English who have travelled in Italy, know very well that many parts of it are as diligently cultivated as the best counties in England; and the English who have not been there, must be sensible that the Italians do not live, like the Tartars, upon the mere product of their cows, ewes, and mares, since it is pretty well known that Italy furnishes England and other parts of the world with many things which are the fruit of their agriculture. Mr. Sharp, inconsistent with himself, and forgetful at times of our characteristic *hatred to laborious employments*, has hinted several times in his book at the perfection of our agriculture. He has said, that *it is hardly to be expressed how beautiful the environs of Ancona are; that the vineyards and arable grounds there afford the most pleasing images he has seen*

of peace and plenty; that there is not an acre of barren ground through all the tract of Lombardy which he has passed: and that the earth there produces three crops at once, namely wine, silk, and corn; the mulberry-trees supporting the vines, and the corn growing in the intervals betwixt the trees.

As to manufactures, no body but Mr. Sharp will ever dream that the Italians *detest* them. Many branches of them, nay most branches are in a flourishing state, and those manufactures are purchased from them by all the commercial world. But is it possible that Mr. Sharp can have visited Italy without seeing manufacturers and other people *laboriously employed*? Has he not seen there a single weaver, dier, hatter, sword-cuttler, paper-maker, coach-maker, shoe-maker? And can any body be persuaded, that we have in Italy no masons, smiths, porters, fellers of wood, stone-sawyers, armourers, brass-founders, and other such hearty fellows, who go through the most *laborious employments* indispensable in polished societies? The rising manufactures of Turin, Milan, Mantua, Vicenza, Florence, Perugia, and Ancona, as well as the established ones so well known in other parts, threaten to rival, if not much to reduce the trade of Lyons; and it is well if Great-Britain herself does not already begin to feel our rivalry, in the decrease of the sale of more than one of her most essential manufactures: and this happens in a country,

try, where, according to Mr. Sharp, they breed up their people to fiddling and singing, on account of their *contempt* and *detestation* of manufactory!

Trade also, Mr. Sharp says, is looked upon as *despicable* among us: but this is as true and as probable as the rest. There is at Naples a duke of my name, (to whom by the way I don't claim the honour of being related) and at Rome one marquis Belloni, who are the chief bankers in those towns. In Venice there are the noble Baglioni, count Peruli, and other people of consequence, who trade publickly in their own names. At Genoa there are the Cambiasi's, the Celestia's, and some of the very chief senators and noblemen, who are likewise publicly concerned in trade. At Ancona there is marquis Trionfi, already named, who is at the very head of the merchants there. I could easily go on to the end of the chapter detailing the names of Italians, who make not the least scruple to ally trade to nobility: but the mentioning of these few will prove sufficient to demolish the assertion of our acute observer, as the names of these few are commonly known on the Royal Exchange; and their affairs are transacted very often there as well as those of numberless other of our merchants, who far from being held as despicable people by their countrymen, are, on the contrary, looked upon in a very honourable light.



If I were to advise a gentleman who undertakes to instruct others, first to be informed himself, I would recommend it to Mr. Sharp to look a little into the state of trade, manufactures, and Italy, before he ventures to say, that trade and manufactures are despised and detested amongst us.

But let me not lose sight of Mr. Sharp's account of our opera's and opera-matters. In his usual affecting strain he says, that a *stranger who has a little compassion in his breast, feels for the poor singers, who are treated with so much indifference and contempt by the Italians, as not to be listened to when they sing on the stage.*

The musicians are indeed very unlucky to meet nothing but contempt in a profession, in which they take refuge, and for which they quit trade and manufactures merely to avoid such treatment! But what an abominable people are the gentry of Italy! Oh the barbarians who do not feel for their poor singers! How can they be so utterly deprived of that virtue, which is the characteristic of true Christians, of the English in general, and of Mr. Sharp in particular! And how can the Italian singers *submit to so gross an affront, and to so dreadful a mortification, as Mr. Sharp expresses it in his usual pathos and true sublime!*

But, Sir, you must excuse me for my laughing at these dismal accounts of our customs and manners. If singing was bread  
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and cheese to the Italians, and if they trampled madly upon their bread and cheese, you could not express their madness in more energetic terms. But singing is only a diversion, and attended to with no more seriousness than a diversion deserves. I have told you already, that we have so great a plenty of music in Italy as to have very good reason to hold it cheap; and every sensible Englishman must wonder at your wonderful wonder on such trifling occasions, and at your solemnity of scolding, as if we were committing murder when we are talkative in the pit, or form ourselves into card-parties in our boxes. Our singers then, though we be unwilling to listen, would be very impertinent, if they did not sing their best, since they are very well paid for so doing; and Caffarello was soon taught better manners when he took it into his head not to do his duty upon the stage of Turin on pretence that the audience was not attentive to his singing. He was taken to gaol in his Macedonian accoutrements for several nights as soon as the opera was over; and brought from the gaol to the stage every evening, until by repeated efforts he deserved universal acclamation.

Mr. Sharp wonders also, that *it is not the fashion in Italy, as it is in England, to take a small wax light to the opera, in order to read the book.* A very acute remark as usual; to which I have nothing to say, but that the Italians are not so good-natured as the English,

who have patience enough to run carefully over a stupid piece of nonsense while a silly eunuch is mincing a vowel into a thousand invisible particles. When we are at the opera, we consider those fellows in the lump as one of the many things that induced us to be there; and we pay the same attention to their singing which we pay to other parts of that diversion. We fix our eyes, for instance, a moment or two on the scenes and the dresses, when they happen to be new and superlatively well imagined: and our fingers would be very ridiculous indeed, if to their customary impudence they added that of pretending to much more regard than what we pay to the pencil of an ingenious scene-painter, or even to the elegance of a fanciful taylor. Our gentlemen then, as well as those of London, have the ladies to look at; and the ladies, we will suppose, have that of looking at the gentlemen, or at one another's cloaths and head-dresses; and having their hands thus full, besides the affair still more important of laughing and talking, what need have they to look in the book? And then, if the opera is not one of those composed by Metastasio, we know certainly beforehand, that it is some composition full as witty as the *Lavinia's* and *Catarattaco's* of our famed Bottarelli; or if the opera is Metastasio's, we know likewise for certain beforehand, that it is as perfectly butchered by the opera-poet, as those that are exhibited in the Haymarket. Let any of  
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the two be the case, would we not be supremely ridiculous to pore for some hours over an opera-book with a small wax-light in our hands?

But it is high time to have done with this tedious subject of opera's. Yet, before I end my chapter, I must let my reader know, that music constitutes a part of our diversions besides the opera's. It is already known that we have a good deal of it, and of the most excellent, in our churches, especially on holidays. We have likewise many kinds of clubs in almost all our towns of any note, where such gentlemen as apply any way to music, (for such there are, whatever Mr. Sharp may say to the contrary) assemble on fixed days to play together till they are weary, and always without the intervention of the bottle, which is rarely a helper to our pleasures. To these kinds of clubs, which we call *Accademia's*, ladies are invited and admitted gratis, and as simple hearers, even when they can perform. It would be a great piece of incivility if any men there was to beg of them to sing or play: but if they condescend to do it of their own motion, the whole company gives them applause and thanks. At Venice when a *procuratore*, *cancellier*, or other great officer of state is made, his friends or dependants by way of compliment collect a numerous mercenary band; get a room over the street through which his excellency makes his entrance into St. Mark's palace; and there a  
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grand concert is played. At Rome on the creation of a pope or a cardinal, and in other parts of Italy on occasion of births or marriages of princes, some great nobleman or some ambassador has a *cantata* made on purpose; that is, a kind of triumphal or epithalamic song, which is sung in some large hall to the nobility invited by the owner of the feast, and not seldom to a great concourse of people, who go there as genteely masked as they can. Such cantata's are generally followed by a grand ball and a most magnificent distribution to every body present of ice-meats and other kinds of refreshments: and as it is customary for the low people to put in their pockets the cups, saucers, spoons, and other such things, after having eaten or drank their *rinresco's*, it is easy to imagine that such treats prove very expensive, and amount to several thousand sequens\*.

But the Italians love music no where so well as in their streets at night. In summer especially, they go about with their fiddles and guitars, their flutes and hautboys, playing, and singing, and stopping under the windows of fine girls and handsome ladies, who are always much pleased with such marks of distinction from their friends and lovers, and often return the civility by sending lemonades, sweetmeats, and nosegays to the performers. At Venice it is a thing really delightful to rove on a summer night about the Laguna in a gondola,

\* A sequen is about ten shillings.



a gondola, and hear from several boats several bands of musicians playing and singing, the moon shining bright, the winds hushed, and the water as smooth as a glass. These *serenata's*, as we call them, are seldom or never disturbed by riots, as would probably be the case in England, were such entertainments customary : and this is perhaps the only music which the Italians enjoy in silence, as if unwilling to spoil the calm and stillness of the night. And thus do I end this chapter, which I fear has proved too long, considering the frivolousness of its argument.

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